



286  
Volume No. 17

## Rules and Regulations Governing Holeman-Speer Library.

By order of the General Association the undersigned were appointed a committee to draft Rules and Regulations governing the letting out of books to those who may desire to avail themselves of the use of the books in the Library.

The committee has formulated the following Rules:

ART. 1. It shall be the duty of the Librarian to keep a correct record of all the Books in the Library in a tabular form, giving number of books in the Library, and authors; also a record of the name and residence of persons taking out books, and giving proper credit when returned.

ART. 2. Every person applying for books shall be required to execute his or her promissory note, payable to the Trustees of the Library, in the sum of ten dollars; said note to be approved by the Librarian, for the safe keeping and prompt return of the books to the Library within the time stipulated in the next article.

ART. 3. No person shall be allowed to take more than one volume at one time, nor for a longer period of time than sixty days without returning the book to the Library. Any person who shall retain a book for a longer period than sixty days shall pay twenty five cents for each week over and above the sixty days; to be paid to the Librarian for the use of the Library.

ART. 4. The Librarian shall not allow the following books taken out of the Library:

Nos ..... yet any person that wants to read them shall be granted the privilege to do so at any time during business hours at the Library, which shall be kept open and free to those desiring to use the books by complying with the general rules of the Library.

ART. 5. All injuries to books beyond reasonable wear shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Board of Trustees. Any book written upon, defaced, torn, or in any way injured, will subject the borrower to a fine and suspension from the privilege of the Library. If books be lost or destroyed, they shall be paid for at the current value by the person losing or destroying the same, and if such book be a part of a set, the loser shall pay for the entire set and be entitled to the remaining volumes.

GEO. W. MOORE,

J. B. COX,

D. B. MONTGOMERY.

} Committee.

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A  
HISTORY  
OF  
GERMAN ANABAPTISM,

GATHERED MOSTLY FROM GERMAN WRITERS, LIVING IN THE  
AGE OF THE

LUTHERAN REFORMATION,

AND EMBRACING A FULL VIEW OF THE

PEASANTS' WARS, THE CELESTIAL PROPHETS,

AND OTHER FANATICS OF THAT DAY,

AND OF THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN  
THE PRESENT BAPTISTS AND THE  
ANABAPTISTS.

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BY PARSONS COOKE.  
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## INTRODUCTION.

It is not in the power of man to produce a book, in the form of a direct and professed argument against popery, that should be as potent for the counteraction of that form of iniquity, as D'Aubigne's historical portraiture of popery in conflict with the rising light of the reformation. This is an example of history made subservient to the cause of truth. It is a rehearsal of the triumphs of truth, achieved in former generations, for the benefit of this. It is the recalling of scenes, in which great principles came into conflict, and tested their power and nature; and it is the renewing, in our age, of the advantage of the results of that conflict. But popery was not the only great power in conflict with truth and the church in that day. Luther was more embarrassed, had his heroic qualities, his firmness, wisdom, patience, and prudence, more tried, in withstanding the troops of disorganizers and spiritual Vandals, that went under the generic name of anabaptists, than he had in his conflict with pope and emperor. And that combination of false principles, called anabaptism, which gathered and exploded among the reformers, with the suddenness of a thunder cloud, at the moment while they were at the most critical and perilous point of their engagement with the powers of Rome, wants only a like organization

and permanency, to render them as destructive to the liberties of man and the instruments of salvation, as Romanism itself. And these principles, in different forms and incarnations, are ever and anon coming abroad, and must be met. They made their most terrible onset in the days of the reformation. But they have been revived, with no little power, in our day. And a good history of the reformers' conflict with the celestial prophets and the anabaptists, would be as serviceable in one direction, as D'Aubigne's has been in another. It would be presumption in us to expect equal success with that prince of historians. But our encouragement has been, that we have found a field of labor almost unoccupied, in which a work in any good degree acceptable to the public, promises great good. And there is, at the present time, special use for a better knowledge of the history of the previous incarnations of these principles.

I have taken pains as far as possible to gather my materials from writers who lived in or near the time of the events they describe; not of course rejecting any information, or serviceable illustrations, found in the popular works on the reformation. But a considerable portion of the book is a compilation and translation from books written in Latin, in the age of the reformation. The work from which I have taken as much as from any other, is, *Sleidani De statu religionis et reipublicæ, Carlo Quinto Cæsare*. This book is in the form of annals. Its author was an admirer of Luther, though he was many years attached to the court of the emperor, and was called to perform some service in connection with the famous Council of Trent. This work obtained great celebrity, and was translated into many languages, and, I believe, into the English. But I have not been able to find an

English copy. It describes the history of the anabaptists only as a part of the memorable events of the age, and in connection with the rest. Though under some years he gives a copious description of their doings for those years.

Another cotemporary work, from which I have derived much assistance, is, *Historia de factione Monasteriensi*, a Conrad Heersbachio. This was written by an eye witness of what he describes, being an officer in an army employed against the rebels. It is written in the form of letters, addressed to Erasmus. I have also drawn much information from notes upon this work, written in Latin, by Theodore Strack.

Another aid has been a work by the title of *Tumultuum Anabaptistarum*, liber unus, auctore Lambert Hortensius Montfort. Still more aid I have derived from *Historia vitæ, doctrinæ, &c.*, Davidis Georgii, a Nickolaio Blesdickio. This writer was a son-in-law of the hero of his history, and had the best advantages to know what he affirmed, and was a man of high and unblemished reputation. I have also made much use of Seckendorf's *Apology for Lutheranism*, and of Spanheim's *Diatriba Historica*, of Cloppenburg's *Gangræna Theologica*, and Calvin's *Tractatus Theologici*. I am also indebted to Wall's *History of Baptism*, to Robinson's *History of Baptism*, Crosby's *History of the English Baptists*, and other works, named in the place where reference to them is made. I have not, except where there seemed to be a manifest occasion for it, made particular quotations from the above named authors, thinking that such references would needlessly cumber the pages. If any are disposed to question the statements made, they will not find it difficult to trace them to their authority. For in case of those most likely to be called in question, I have given chapter and verse.

The history of those scenes of violence proceeding from false doctrine and fanaticism, is one of the most deeply interesting chapters in the history of the human race. These are among those facts which are "stranger than fiction," and we need not enter fields of romance, for entertaining matter, while we have the record of such facts. But these records are also full of illustrations of the great principles of God's government and man's rebellion. For we do not well understand the system of divine truth, till we have seen it in its relations to the inventions and artifices of men and devils, that have been brought into conflict with it.

An outbreak of a particular species of fanaticism is ever sure, in its own age, to be attended with all the advantages of novelty. It is forgotten, or never known, by the mass of the people whom it afflicts, that the same thing, under another name, has scourged the world before. And it would be a great advantage to the friends of pure religion, in such a case, if they were able to strip the rising sect of all the advantages of the appearance of having made a new and wonderful discovery.

The present is an age of reformation, and therefore beset with peculiar dangers. The popular mind is breaking away from established usages, good and bad, the foundations of our institutions are turned up, for a new examination. Everything old is under suspicion; and that which is new is in great request with many. While truth and righteousness are progressing under a new impulse, error and fanaticism have awoke to a new life. And many of the popular measures and movements embrace a great mixture of good and evil, often perplexing us to know what the Lord will have us to do. To aid every good work, and still be clear of all participation in mischievous schemes, is



no simple task. A cause so manifestly good, so simple in its designs, so beneficent in its end, as that of temperance, advances in such connection with turbulent elements, as often to require great care and discrimination, lest while seeming to work reform, we are propelling an engine of death. And in many other ways, the streams of salvation are flowing upon our world, pure and healing in themselves, but in their course they often come in contact with elements of depraved passion, and then, after the mingling of waters, the river of life cannot easily be distinguished from the river of death. In such a case, it is not safe, with an indiscriminating charity, to bid God-speed to every scheme that comes up under the name of benevolence and reform. We have occasion to believe not every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God. It would doubtless seem very amiable and kind in us, to credit all pretensions, and to help every scheme of professed reform, asking no questions for conscience's sake. But that policy would place us in very questionable connections. Luther has well said, "No heretic comes under the title of errors and of the devil, nor does the devil himself come as a devil, in his own likeness. Yea, even the black devil, which forces men to commit manifest wickedness, makes a cloak for them to cover their wickedness. So these devilish spirits [the anabaptists] extol and magnify their cursed doctrine, calling it the word of God, and so under color of God's name, they deceive many. For the devil will not be ugly and black in his ministers, but fair and white, decking all his words and works with the color of truth and the name of God. Hereof is sprung that common proverb, In God's name all mischief begins." But this sentiment the apostle better expresses, when he says, that satan is transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers may be expected to claim to be ministers of righteousness.

Yea, if we were to exercise that charity that admits all pretences, we should install the devil himself, as the prince of all reformers.

But if we will exercise the discrimination which the state of the world requires, we must take in the lights of the world's experience. After having passed a difficult and perplexing scene, we often think that if we were to go through it again, we should act more wisely. And if the church, like an individual, had the power of gathering and appropriating the result of past experience, and if this person or church personified, could live through all ages, and bring to present use, the experience got in all, she would be much better prepared for present emergencies. For present difficulties are often but the repetition of former scenes in the great drama.

The object of the present labor, is to make the history of the past serve as a guide to present action. The most remarkable reformation, since the first planting of the church, was that of which Luther was the leading instrument; about 300 years ago. By that, all christendom was shaken, and all the institutions of society agitated to their deepest foundations. But that reformation had not left the cradle of its infancy, before tempests of fanaticism beat upon it, and threatened its extinction. And the history of that reformation is full of instruction as to the mode of dealing with existing fanaticisms, the offshoots and excrescences of present reforms. The blessings of a true reformation, are always to be secured by great pains in guarding against incidental evils. So it was then; so it must be now. And we can have no better antidote against the fanaticisms that impede the present progress of true religion, than a knowledge of what was said and done when these same elements came into conflict 300 years ago.

We shall also see, that the existence of spurious re-

forms, is no evidence that a real reform is not in progress. The reformation in the days of Luther, was reproached with all the extravagances of the times. All the rebellions and bloodshed engendered by these extravagances, were laid to the charge of the reformation. And that glorious work of God at times seemed well nigh buried in the ruins accumulated by fanatical violence. Yet after this and that explosion, the cloud passed away, and left the work going on like the sun in his strength. The true reform having its vital principle from the spirit of God, was seen to be above dependence on the will of fanatical men. However dark the day appeared to the reformers, when fanaticism was going forth in its fury, and blood was flowing in rivers, and a war of denunciation and wrath was carried indiscriminately against both papists and reformers, to us who look back upon those scenes in the light of history, it seems clear as day that a glorious work was in progress, even in the darkest hours. The Lutheran reformation, estimated by its results, strikes the view as a splendid work. Yet that work was beset in its progress, with the worst forms of fanaticism.

So in these days, a great work of reform is in progress. The scenes are rapidly shifting; one great event, bearing on the kingdom of Christ, treads upon the heels of another. Truth and righteousness, though fiercely beset, are fast gaining ground; the leading vices of the times are giving way before an adequate reforming power; and the gospel is having a wider publication. Yet if we were to look only at the dark sides of the picture, and see how much of a deforming power is at work, under pretexts of religion, and how many fanaticisms are contending for the privilege of making a millennium at once, it would seem that the very name of reform was in danger of being hissed,

in contempt, from the world. In this state of things, most appropriate is the consolation of knowing, from the lights of history, that a real and glorious reform may be in progress, though some of its concomitants and excrescences are of a very undesirable nature. The work, like the glowing metal upon the anvil, taking its shape from the heavy blows of the hammer, is ever shooting off its mad and hissing cinders, which, when separate from the mass, lose both their light and heat, and pass to forgetfulness. But the work goes on, and takes its finish and polish, in spite of the hissing fragments that have played about it.

## CHAPTER I.

It is not strange, that minds not chastened by saving views of divine truth, and predisposed to enthusiasm, should have taken a powerful impulse, from the inspiring events of the Lutheran reformation. It was no easy matter, for human sensibilities to slumber between the rocking of such earthquakes, and the explosions of such volcanoes, as signalized the morning of that day. The reformation was wonderful for nothing more, than the rapidity, with which the gospel, then let loose from prison, travelled forth in every direction, like the beams of a rising sun. In the year 1516, Luther first heard of Tetzels, and his atrocious proceedings, under authority from the Pope. Then, in reply to some extravagant expressions of Tetzels, which one reported to him, he said with indignation; "God willing, I will make a hole in his drum." Here with little thought of what he was undertaking, he in effect made his declaration of war with papacy. Here was the first existence in embryo, of the plan of the vast enterprise, which God was about to perform by his in-

strumentality. And so rapidly did the movement here begun, advance, that it was only five years after this; when the reformation had gone so far, that Satan had already found the insufficiency of direct opposition, and the need of sending the self-styled Celestial Prophets, to kindle back fires to arrest the flame. In this short time, the impulse begun in Saxony, like the concentric waves spreading out from an agitated surface, had traversed the extent of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France and England. In this brief space, the fears of the Pope, and also the indignation of the Emperor had been roused; and the solitudes of the German princes had concentrated in that most tragical farce, the Diet of Worms. In this brief space, the reformation had gone so far, as to show the spectacle of the governmental powers of the Empire, striving together to crush a powerless monk—or rather that, of the kings of the earth, and the rulers, taking counsel against the Lord, and against his Anointed. That council of kings had assembled, and had heard the plea, of the man accused of turning the world upside down. But so wide and deep a sensation had been created, upon the heart of Germany, that the arm that was lifted, to crush him at a blow, was palsied in its return. The Diet heard his defence, anxiously deliberated upon his destiny, and uttered a sentence, which they dared not execute. It made a show of victory, while suffering defeat. Luther, strong in his confidence in God, and assurance that the work had



become too strong, for kings and emperors, to arrest, laughed at the sentence of outlawry, which they in their wrath fulminated against him. And he facetiously summed up the result, of this mighty spasm of the empire thus; "I expected that his Majesty would have assembled fifty learned doctors, to convict me outright. But not at all. Are these books of your writing? Yes. Will you retract them? No. Well begone. There is the whole history." A few such victories would have annihilated the papacy.

Next Luther vanished from the public gaze, and neither friend nor foe, knew the place of his retreat, nor whether he was dead or alive. But his foes came under dark suspicions, of having assassinated him. Yet his cause, in his absence, was better seen to be the cause of God; and was advancing more rapidly, than before. And he in the castle of Wartburg, was translating the bible, and executing other writings, needful for his work. His very absence made the public heart more quick and sensitive, and through sympathy more inclined to favor the reformation. All sorts of rumors floated on every breeze. And his enemies trembled at the results of his disappearance; an agent of the Pope said, in a letter to a friend, "The only way of extricating ourselves, is to light our torches, and go searching through the earth for Luther, till we can restore him to the nation, that will have him."

Thus was the heart of Germany penetrated with the thrilling themes, which Luther had opened. And

of course, whatever susceptibilities of enthusiastic emotion lay in the public mind, were now powerfully touched. And it is not strange, that one whose ruling passion was ambition, should like Carolstadt, have desired to strike out another reformation, in order to make himself as famous as Luther. The only wonder is, that he should have confessed such a motive, while he was under its influence. But ambition was not the only passion, that was stirred. The appetite for deep emotions of any kind—the same which attracts throngs to theatres, to witness tragic scenes, and the same that makes fanatical exercises, or mental drunkenness a matter of desire, as much as is the inebriate's cup—had now exhaustless material to feed it. The love of the marvellous, the love of novelties and of the illusions of fancy, had also powerful stimulants, in the rapidly shifting scenes of that day. All around was new and strange, much like an awaking from a dream upon a new world. The foundations of many generations were upturned; startling and revolutionizing principles were abroad; the clergy were shaken, in their thrones of despotism; the monasteries were coming down with a crash, and the monks were flying forth as flocks of unclean birds, dislodged from their rookery: and ominous voices were heard, denouncing, and invoking public indignation upon orders, customs and institutions, before regarded as sacred. Hence minds, not chastened by divine truth, fell into a dangerous current. They were liable to take up without dis-

crimination a notion, that the way to work a glorious reform was, to pour contempt on all that is sacred. And such as had an active hatred, for gospel-truth, now breaking forth from its dark prison, and blazing on the public conscience, would naturally run into any movement, hostile to a true reform. These and similar causes may be regarded as the spring of the fanatical developement, which we are about to describe.

The sect of anabaptists took its birth in 1521. Its fathers were Nicolas Stork, Mark Thomas, Martin Cellary and last but not least, Thomas Muncer. Muncer is fairly entitled to stand at the head of the list. One early historian says of these men, that they made professions of piety of a higher style, maintained at first, a very specious and imposing way of life, thirsting for innovations, ambitious of fame, and born for the perpetration of the greatest crimes. Cellary had been a familiar friend of Melanchton. He for a while, took up the cause of the fanatics with great zeal: but afterwards he listened to admonitions of Melanchton and Luther, and abandoned it, and threw off not only the name of the sect, also his own name, and took another that of Borrhaus, to signify his abhorrence of his errors. And he became professor of philosophy, and afterwards of theology in the university of Basle. He did the church essential service, by his publications, not only upon logic and Mathematics, but also in the form of commentaries upon the scriptures. He died suddenly in Basle of the plague, having nobly served

his generation forty years, after his recovery from his fall.

Stork and Stubner used each his peculiar gift to seduce the incautious and unreflecting. Stubner was, at the time of the outbreak, a Senior student at Wittenberg. At the call of Stork, he left the seminary, with respectable acquisitions. To these he added ingenuity and rare adroitness in perverting scripture. Stork was illiterate, a baker, yet gifted with great fluency, boldness and tact in touching the springs of popular passion. By his overbearing torrents of words, his ostentation and high pretensions to piety, pervaded by a glowing zeal and enthusiasm, and also by his artifice and intrigue, he sustained a reputation of being a great favorite of heaven, and a fit medium for divine communications. Compared with Muncer, however, both Stork and Stubner operated cautiously; Muncer was by nature more bold and rash.

Carolstadt commenced his fanatical operation independently of the other. He at first broke off from Luther and the reformers, for other causes; yet a similarity of spirit soon brought him into connexion with Muncer and his company, and he became as wild as they. He soon got involved in a fierce conflict with the reformers, as we shall see, and afterwards became reconciled to them, and useful in the reformation.

D' Aubigne, who gives a quite as favorable account of him, as facts will justify, though he makes him less learned, than do other historians, thus describes him

and his career: "Carolstadt above all took a part in the general ferment. Zealous, upright and fearless, prompt like Luther to sacrifice every thing for truth, he had not the reformer's wisdom or moderation. He was not free from vanity, and with a disposition that led him to go deeply into every question, he had yet but little power of judgement, and no great clearness of ideas. Luther had delivered him from the teaching of the schools, and led him to study the scriptures. But Carolstadt had not the patience to acquire a knowledge of the original languages, and had not, as his friend had done, acknowledged the sufficiency of God's word. Hence he was often taking up singular interpretations. As long as Luther was at his side, the influence of the master restrained the disciple, within due bounds. But Carolstadt was freed from this wholesome restraint. In the university, in the chapel, throughout Wittenberg, the tawney complexioned Carolstadt, who had never excelled in eloquence, gave utterance to thoughts, at times profound, but often enthusiastic and exaggerated. "What infatuated folly" (he exclaimed) "for men, who think to leave the reformation to God's working! A new order of things is opening. The strength of man must be brought in; and woe to him, who shall hold back instead of mounting the breach, in the cause of the mighty God!" These appeals called forth a response from men of sincere, upright, yet indiscriminating and incautious minds. And the cry among them was;

“Whatever the Pope has set up is impious. Let us not make ourselves accomplices, in these abominations, by allowing them to exist. That which God’s word condemns, ought to be swept from the face of Christendom, without regarding the commandments of men. If rulers will not do their duty, let us do ours. We want a second Elijah, to throw down the altars of Baal.” Such is D’ Aubigne’s account of Carolstadt and his first experience, as an anabaptist. But Carolstadt’s movement was only a collateral branch of the main development of anabaptism, and he cooperated with the sect but for a short time.

Stork, Muncer and the others commenced their movement in the little town of Zuickau. They did not take the name of anabaptists, or re-baptisers, for a very obvious reason; though they not only rebaptised those that came to them, after baptism had in the churches; but often on receiving members from other churches of their own sect. They assumed and received from others, a great variety of names. As they were wont to hold their meetings, in gardens and open fields, they were sometimes called Garden-Brethren. By reason of boasting so much of the Spirit, they were called Spirituals. And their abundant revelations procured for them the name of Dreamers. Sometimes they went by the name of The Brethren and Sisters. These men partaking of the excitement of the passing scenes, threw themselves upon the current of the popular movement and placed the propen-



sities of unsanctified minds at the helm. Instead of seeking the sanctification of their own hearts and lives, by the use of the word of God, they indulged the fancy of being taught immediately and supernaturally by the Spirit of God. They in common with all fanatics, had the notion, that the bible is imperfect and needing corrections and supplements, either from human reason, or from the light within, or from direct revelations of the Spirit. They claimed that they had been commissioned, to complete the reformation, which Luther had but feebly begun. Their idea seems to have been like this—, „Luther has made a great noise, and we must make a greater; he has reached a fame of dazzling luster, but we must eclipse him. He has succeeded, by introducing new and startling principles; and as this appears to be the path to fame, we will outstrip him in it, by introducing something still more startling. Luther has made the nations tremble, but we will play off earthquakes among them.” Hence their bold and impudent announcement of being commissioned, to give revelations direct from heaven, and those revelations such, as set aside the bible, as so much useless lumber. “What is the use, (they cried) of such close application to the bible? Nothing is heard but the bible, bibel bubal babel. Can the bible preach to us? Can it suffice for our instruction? If God intended to instruct us by a book, would he not have given us a bible direct from heaven? It is only the Spirit, that can enlighten. God himself

speaks to us and shows us what we must do and say." The principles which Muncer inculcated as to the way of salvation; were, that salvation is to be obtained, by avoiding all manifest crimes, such as murder and blasphemy, and by mortifying the body, fasting, wearing simple dress, an austere countenance, rarely speaking, and cultivating the beard. These and such like practices he called mortifying the flesh. He taught that we ought often to retire from the busy world, think of God in solitude; and that in prayer we should peremptorily demand, of God a miracle by which we may know, that he has a care for us, and that our religion is better than that of the Turks. And if he do not give a sign at once, we must expostulate with him, and continue to demand it; yea we must blame and reproach him for not doing it. For since the scriptures promise, that he will give us what we ask, it would be unjust in him, to withhold a miracle from those, who seek the true knowledge of him. And this expostulation and even anger, he said, was pleasing to God, because it tells our earnestness in prayer. And it is not to be doubted, that if we ask in such a manner, he will grant the miracle, as he did to the fathers of old. He also taught, that God now reveals his will by dreams. In his harangues he bestowed great praise, upon those whose dreams he fancied he had been able to interpret.

In the year 1524 he published a book, called *The Testification of the first chapter of Luke's Gospel.*

He took for his motto, Ezek. 8 : 8, altered thus; "Son of man dig now in the wall, and make the hole wider, and see what these great houses are." In this book he says, that the mystery of the Christian religion consists, in interpreting the scriptures, according to the teaching of the Spirit; and that faith is to be recieved with trembling—intimating some immediate and terrific revelation had in the exercise of faith, perhaps like that notion, which gave the name of Quakers, to another sect, appearing somewhat later, and having some features of resemblance with this. He further says, that Christ did not reccommend the searching of the scriptures to his own people, but to the impious Pharisees. For Christ's people, he says, have true faith, through their whole life. Though they may neither have seen nor heard of the scriptures, they may have learned of the Spirit, and so been assured, that they have recieved from God an infallible faith. He held that there may be christians among all nations of heathen, though total strangers to the gospel—a notion, by the way, quite prevalent in some quarters at this day. He maintained, that one educated among the heathen, without any book, may experience the true work of God. He taught that some men are carried to heaven without dying, by virtue of the incarnation of Christ. He inveighed against all governments, and called them insane, who inculcated the duty of obeying the powers that be. He predicted, that some terrible calamity was about to explode upon

the whole world, Whether his prediction were the offspring of his purpose, then formed but not announced, to be himself the fire-brand, that should ignite the train, that was to set the world in a blaze, does not appear. But from whatever source the revelation was, it confidently affirmed, that the wicked princes were to be hurled from their thrones, and the humble to be exalted; that the people had need of a new John the Baptist, as a herald of grace, and to prepare the way for those great events; and that God had commissoned him, Thomas Muncer, to that office. He declared that, that teaching which relies exclusively upon the bible, and is without immediate inspiration, is worse than the blasphemy of the devil. This he attempted to prove from the scripture itself; and show that the bible is not a sufficient warrant of faith. And with this exposition of his views, he joined a fierce war upon the clergy. He also held notions about God's property in us; and ours in God's creatures, which were the germs of the communityism and agrarianism, which he afterwards developed. But he affirmed that he could easier instruct Turks than Christians, on that subject: for they called him a fanatic, as soon as he uttered a word upon it.

Stork, being joined by Muncer and Thomas, who left his employment as a weaver, for one of more questionable utility. The efforts of the three gave the sect the first appearance of an organization. Resolving to act after the example of Christ, Stork chose out of his

followers, twelve apostles and seventy disciples or evangelists. All these went abroad and loudly proclaimed, that the apostles and prophets were, at last restored to the church. Then they began to open their mission, and went abroad, crying: "Woe, woe, to a church, under human governours, so corrupt. That church cannot be the church Christ." This announcement, so much in the style of a class of pseudo-reformers, who have lately made some noise among us, was backed by the declaration, that the angel Gabriel had appeared to Stork, and had revealed to him matters, which he was not allowed to divulge. The prediction was given out, that the ungodly rulers of christendom shall soon be cast down; that in five, six, or at most seven years, universal desolation shall come upon the earth; the Turk shall get possession of Germany, the clergy, not excepting those who have married, shall be slain; the sinners and the ungodly shall all be exterminated. And when the earth shall have been purified by blood, supreme power shall be given to Stork, to install the saints, in the government and possession of the earth. Then there shall be one faith and one baptism. They said—The day of the Lord draweth nigh; the end of all things is at hand. Woe, woe, woe. Then publickly proclaiming, that infant baptism was of no avail, the new prophets summoned all, old and young, to draw near and recieve the true baptism, in token of their entering the church of God. Such announcements thrown in upon the public mind, al-

ready so excited, so sensitive, so blind as to the truth, and hence so open to alarms, made a great impression. Not a few devout persons were startled, at the idea of prophets being again given to the church. And those on whom the love of the marvellous had more power, and motives addressed to reason and conscience less, threw themselves into the arms of the new teachers at Zuickau.

Now commenced the collision between the reformers and the anabaptists; a war more of more peril to the reformation, and of more critical moment to the interests of pure religion, than even the war with papacy. Nicolas Hausman was the reformed preacher at Zuickau, at this time; and he was the honored instrument of the first resistance to that horde of Vandals. And he was a fit man, to be entrusted with this honor and testimony for the truth. Luther recorded this noble acknowledgement of his worth—"What we teach he acts." He stood his ground against the pretensions of the false prophets, supported by his two deacons. And, as it is common with fanatics, these prophets by checks, opposed to their extravagance, were only excited to greater excesses. They now collected assemblies where they could, separate from the church, and commenced boldly to propogate revolutionizing principles, affecting both the church and the state. The people soon caught the infection, and commenced reducing the doctrine to practice, by mobbing a priest, who was carrying the sacramental elements, and pelt-



ing him with stones. The civil authority interfered, and committed the offenders to prison. And as the governments have been much blamed, and in some instances with good reason, for using persecuting measures against this sect, justice requires it to be remarked here, in this early stage of the narrative, that the operations of this sect were something more than the mere propagation of opinions. There was in them an actual and declared war, upon the order and peace of society. There was in them actual sedition, and often wholesale pillage, butchery and burning. And it is a remarkable fact, corresponding with the character of the movement, that one of the first demonstrations of itself was in a riot, which called for their punishment, not as martyrs to their opinions, but as men of violence, expiating their crimes. But persons so sacred as these fancied themselves, could ill endure the indignity of a punishment, from a source so profane as the civil government. Indignant at this treatment, and determined on redress, Stork, Thomas and Stubner hastened to Wittemberg, Dec. 27, 1521, Stork led the way with the port and bearing of a soldier. The others followed behind. In order to avail themselves of excitements among the students of the university, they called on the professors, and demanded their permission and sanction to address the students and people. They declared—"We are sent of God, to teach the people, and we demand a hearing from them." "Who commissioned you to preach?" en-

quired Melanchton of Stubner. "The Lord our God," he replied. "Have you committed any thing to writing?" "The Lord our God has forbidden me to do so." Melanchton drew back, awed by the boldness of the spirit before him, mingling alarm with doubt, as to its origin, whether from above or from beneath. Said he, "These indeed are spirits of no ordinary kind, but what spirits, none but Luther can tell. Let us beware on the one hand, of quenching the Spirit of God, and on the other of being seduced by the spirit of the devil."

It was at this time that Cellary, whom we have before named, became a proselyte of these men. He had been till now, the familiar friend of Melanchton; and was at this time, the head of a school, attended by large numbers of youth. But with blind confidence he admitted the claims of these false prophets, and so made work for bitter repentance. Stork after a short time, left Wittemberg. Stubner remained behind, going, with all zeal from house to house, proselyting whom he could.

These were anxious days with Melanchton in the absence of Luther. And he calls the attention of Frederick, the Elector of Saxony to the subject, and seeks his advice. The following is a part of his letter to his prince, the protector of the reformation:

"Your highness must excuse the liberty, which I take; the occasion is urgent, and calls exceedingly for your attention. You are aware of the many danger-

ous dissensions, which have distracted your city of Zuickau, on the subject of religion. Some persons have been cast into prison there, for their seditious innovations. Three of the ringleaders have come hither. Two of them are ignorant mechanics; the third is a man of letters. I have given them a hearing; and what they tell of themselves is astonishing. They say, that they are positively sent by God to teach; that they have familiar conferences with God; that they can foretell events; and to be brief, that they are equal to the prophets and apostles. I cannot describe how I am moved by these lofty pretensions. I see strong reasons, for not despising the men; for it is clear to me, that there is in them a spirit more than human; but whether it be the spirit of God, or not, none but Martin can easily judge. And I think by all means, Martin should have an opportunity of examining them, especially as they appeal to him."

The Elector, desirous of following the will of God, yet distrusting his own judgement, as to what that will might be, called in the advice of his most able counsellors. These felt the same doubts, and could come to no decision. Upon this the Elector astonished the the council by the following declaration; "This is a most weighty and difficult case, which I a layman do not comprehend. If I rightly understood the matter, so as to see my duty, I would not knowingly resist the will of God. No, I would rather take my staff and quit every thing I possess." Here are seen the

depths of Satan, in the difficulty, which these wisest men of the age had, in forming a judgement upon the pretensions of those prophets. If Frederick the Wise with all his wise men, and Melanchton learned, calm and profound, with the lights, collected in that celebrated university, were non-plused, by those crafty hypocrites, we need not wonder, that such multitudes of the people fell victims to the delusion. There was probably much reason in Melanchton's remark, that a spirit more than human moved those men. And their subsequent conduct plainly showed, whence the spirit came. Melanchton continued to urge Frederick to call in the aid of Luther. He said that no person could manage the affair so well; Stork and his associates had raised disputes about the baptism of infants, and had appealed to supernatural revelations, experienced by themselves; and he felt himself unable to decide in such a case. The cautious Frederick would not risk the consequences of evoking Luther from his Patmos. And he advised Melanchton, to avoid disputes, and use every precaution to prevent the recurrence of such scenes, as those at Zuickau. Meanwhile Melanchton employed all means to get information, withal treating Stubner, a man of considerable learning, with hospitality, and meekly bearing his fooleries, awaited some turn of events, to restore Luther to take the helm again. And at no crisis, was the necessity of just such a mind as Luther's, for this work more apparent.

## CHAPTER II.

We have glanced at the origin of the so called Celestial Prophets, and the onset which they made upon Wittemberg, the cradle of the reformation, and the home of Luther. The time for the onset was chosen when Luther, the skillful pilot of ship, was absent in his seclusion from the tempest of papal wrath in the castle of Wartburg. He had been sent there, as the only way of preserving his life, since he had been declared an outlaw, by the edict of Worms. Frederick though earnestly desiring to screen him from harm had no other way of doing it, by reason of the imperial authority in the case. And he insisted on Luther's remaining in the castle. And this he was content to do, as long as the work of reformation was prospering, and as long as he was so effectually aiding it by his translation of the bible; a work so needful to his great design, and for which his seclusion afforded so good an opportunity.

But now another scene had opened; Satan in the person of the enthusiast prophets, had invaded the ve-

ry central seat and the sanctuary of the reformation. A spirit of Vandalism had entered Wittenberg, which if it should prevail, threatened to lay all waste, and entomb the last hope of the reformation, and quench the light of the world. The fruits of new doctrines had begun to ripen. Men's minds began to be diverted from the gospel, and to be prejudiced against it. The schools were broken up; the students demoralized, had sundered the bands of discipline, the reputation of the university was going to ruin, its patrons were recalling the students, and Rome was rejoicing in the prospect of a speedy end to the reformation. And who was there to breast the tide? Melancthon, was too timid to face such a storm; and Frederick had even more of the same weakness. Confusion and ruin to the city and to the cause, which was to Luther more than life, and that seemingly proceeding from the reformation itself, had to all appearance brought the whole work to the brink of an abyss. In this crisis, almost every voice was clamorous for Luther's return. The citizens needed him, to restore peace to the city. The teachers felt distressing need of his counsels and guidance. And even his enemies, the enthusiast prophets, appealed to him under pretence, that he would sustain them.

Here was a case made out for him in the providence of God, involving immense perplexity and responsibility. Rarely is a mere mortal called to bear such a burden. The danger to his life, in case he was found



without the walls of his castle, great as it was, was but a trifle compared with the damage, which he saw to his cause. From the whole breadth of the German states, voices were proceeding, and denouncing him as the author of all the disorders. Here was the most painful crisis of his eventful life, He asked himself—“Is this the end of the great reformation? Impossible. God has begun the work, and God will complete it. I prostrate myself before the Eternal, and implore that his name may rest upon it, and if any thing impure has mingled with the doing of it, he will remember, that I am but a sinful man.” Luther well knew, that the imposing pretences of the prophets were all a cheat; and had none of Melancton’s hesitation about denouncing them outright, And grief and anxiety pressed him down, that such a delusion should have intervened to turn aside the great truths of salvation by grace. Yea he contemplated with sadness the whole position of affairs, the wide spread calamity already experienced, and the still wider in prospect, and declared his conviction, that a time of trouble was coming upon the empire, which would sweep away princes, magistrates and bishops. He said “The people’s eyes are open, and they cannot be driven by force; Germany will be deluged in blood. Let us take our stand, as a wall of defence to our country, in the day of God’s anger.” Thus with a foresight seemingly prophetic, did he declare, what time most fearfully verified. And though his body was confined at

Wartburg, in the dark recesses of a forest, his unfettered soul was abroad upon the field of the great moral conflict, and his thoughts dwelt amid the agitations of Wittemberg his favorite city, the birth-place of his glorious enterprize. With the eye of his mind, aided by successive reports of disaster, treading close on the heels one of another, like Job's messengers of bereavement, he surveyed the length and breadth of the calamity. And it was to him like a consuming fire, about to enwrap the labor of his hands and the desire of his eyes. Now an affecting dilemma was offered to him. Shall he rush forth and extinguish the flame? His path is beset with enemies thirsting for his blood. His prince and protector entreats and commands him, not to risk his life. But go he must and go he did. He who on a former occasion said: "I hear the Emperor has published a mandate to frighten me. But Christ lives, and I will enter Worms, though all the gates of hell and all the powers of darkness may oppose. I mean to terrify the prince of darkness; and I will enter Worms, though I should encounter as many devils, as there are tiles on the houses of the city;"—the man who could say this, in such a crisis, was not backward to risk his life again, when a higher good required the risk. He bade a prompt farewell to the castle, at once his prison and his protection, from the thunders of Rome and the sword of the Emperor. He had at first come thither for shelter, from a rage against him, for his innova-

tions. And now he goes forth himself against innovators of another kind. In short he was about to risk his life to save his cause from being ruined, by the very sins which had been falsely laid to his charge.

He set forth alone on horse-back, in the guise of a knight, with military equipments; not forgetting, that the Emperor's edict had made every man his lawful executioner, and that whole interests of Rome were pledged for his destruction, and all in those interests, like so many hungry lions, were ready to devour him. In this condition he commenced his solitary journey of five days. On his way he wrote to Frederick, and told him that the reports of what was passing at Wittenberg, had almost reduced him to despair; that all he had suffered before was but children's play in the comparison. He could not enough lament, or condemn those turbulent proceedings, bringing the gospel into disgrace. That with regard to himself, he wished him to understand, that his confidence was in the justice of his cause. He said; "Hitherto I have offered myself for public examination, because I hoped that such humility on my part, might induce others to listen to truth. But now I see, that this moderation of mine is by Satanic art, turned to the disadvantage of the gospel. I mean therefore no longer to concede, as I have done." He alludes to the severe persecutions, then carried on by Duke George, and says—Were Leipzig itself in such a condition as Wittenberg, I would go thither, though for nine days together, it should rain

Duke Georges, and every one ten times more cruel, than the present one. At the same time, he said, I have prayed for him often, and will pray for him, although I know, he would kill me with a single word, if he could. I write this that your highness may know, that in returning to Wittemberg, I consider myself under far more powerful protection, than what the Elector of Saxony can afford me. To be plain, it is my decided judgement, that your highness will rather receive protection from the prayers of Luther and the merits of his cause. It is a cause which needs not the aid of the sword; God will take care of it. He will be found to have best defended both himself others, who has had the firmest confidence in God. Should I be taken or put to death, you must stand excused, even with my best friends, because I have not followed your advice. Think not of opposing the Emperor by force; permit him to do what he pleases with the lives and property of your subjects. Be assured, this business is decided in the councils of heaven, in a very different manner, from what it is by the regency at Nuremberg; and we shall shortly see, that those who now dream, that they have absolutely devoured the gospel, have not even begun the imaginary feast. There is another Being, more powerful than Duke George, with whom I have to do. If you could but believe this, you would see the glory of God. But you remain in darkness through unbelief."

The Elector read the letter with astonishment at

the intrepidity of the reformer; and took a deeper sense of the need of caution, and of restraining the bold spirit, of one whom he so much loved and admired. He thought it not prudent himself, to write a word in reply. But he committed to Jerome Schurff the business of communicating his mind confidentially. Schurff visited Luther, and induced him to write another letter to the Elector, giving the reasons of his leaving Wartburg, but in such a form, that he might show it to his friends. In this it was made to appear, that he took the step without orders of his prince, and intended to put no one to any inconvenience. A copy was sent to the Elector, for him to modify it as he chose. But one of the changes made was not relished. His frank and ingenuous mind revolted, at the suggestion, to apply the epithet, *clementissimum*, or most merciful, to the Emperor whom he knew to be his most implacable enemy. But not to thwart the weakness of the Elector, he finally submitted, on the ground that it was a customary term of respect to the chief magistrate, and not understood as describing his personal qualities. In giving his reasons for leaving the castle, he says in this letter;—

“During my absence, Satan made such sad inroads upon my own flock, and raised such commotions, as I could not repress by mere writing. My presence among my people is indispensable. I must live with them; and they must see my mode of proceeding; I must guide them and do them, all the good I can; they

are my children in Christ, and my conscience will not let me be absent from them any longer. Though I should offend your clemency, or bring upon myself the indignation of the whole world, the pressing necessity of the church ought to take place of every other consideration. Then, I am much distressed, by a well grounded apprehension of some great and violent sedition in Germany."

After a journey of five days, the interesting incidents of which cannot be here related, he entered Wittemberg. And there was great joy in that city. They received him as an apostle of Christ, or as an angel of God. Teachers, students and citizens joined in mutual congratulations, on the arrival of the pilot who could bring the vessel off from the reefs. But his own mind bore too heavy a burden, to enter fully into the general joy. The question was now brought to a test, whether the teaching of the bible, which had so shaken the world, could moderate its agitations, arrest the headlong course of the multitude, intoxicated with the liberty, which bible-teaching had procured, and so reform without destroying. This question now thrilled his heart in view of the struggle before him. Though his whole soul was roused for the conflict, like a lion shaking his mane, his spirit was calm and mild, in proportion to the immense pressure upon him. He hurled no anathemas, but went about his work like a tender shepherd: showing that such a mind, as God peculiarly furnishes to controvert error



may also combine the meek and affectionate qualities of the pastor.

And he had grounds for calm repose of soul, in his exclusive reliance on God's written word. Melancthon was non-plused by the bold pretensions of the prophets; and great perplexity came over the reformed teachers, because they had not a clear conception of the sufficiency of the written word, foreclosing all expectation of new revelations. If Melancthon had at that time clearly and strongly grasped the principle, that the bible and the bible alone is the religion of protestants—that God's revelation is complete in his written word, and hence that no other true prophets or apostles are to be expected, he would have had little trouble in the advent of those false prophets.

To give a clear view of what it was, that furnished Luther's mind so readily to detect the imposture, we here quote from his commentary on Genesis the following:—

“Because I am not competent to have or interpret dreams, I do not desire that faculty, and have made a covenant with the Lord my God, that he shall not send me either visions, dreams, or apparitions of angels. For I am content with the gift which I have, in the holy scriptures, which teach all that is needful both for this life and also for that which is to come. In this I rest sure, that I am not deceived. Nor do I depretiate other gifts. If God should reveal to any one any thing by visions or angels, I would not despise

the gift, provided it were a reality. But for such a gift I neither care nor desire. For I am moved by the countless multitude of illusions, prodigies and impostures, by which Satan so long and so horribly deceived the world, under the papacy. And then if I did not give faith to the sufficiency of the holy scriptures, I could not easily trust to an angel, or a vision, or a dream. For I have enough and more than enough of revelations, when I know what is to be believed, what is to be hoped for, what advice to give to others, and how to spend this life piously and honestly." In another place he says;—

"But I have often said, that from the beginning of my cause, I have asked the Lord, that he would not send me either dreams, visions, or angels. For many fanatic spirits beset me, who boast, some of dreams, some of visions, and some of revelations, with which they attempted to instruct me. But I replied, that I desired no revelations of that sort, and if any were offered me, I had no faith in them. And this I ardently prayed, that God would give me the true sense and understanding of the scriptures. If I have the word, I know that I am right, and cannot easily err or stray. I had rather have David's understanding of the scriptures, than his prophetic visions,—which I think he did not greatly desire. But see how certain a sense the scriptures have. When the fanatics beset me and endeavored to lead me hither and thither with their dreams, if I had listened to them, I should have

had to change my doctrine three or four times. But when I rejected them all, they denounced me, as obstinate and dismissed me at once. So that I make no account of visions or dreams, though seemingly significant, but rather despise them. For if I have the word of God, I am sure that I have God and the angels present; if not visible, yet present to inject their rays, and lead me in the way of truth."

In this conviction Luther seems to have stood upon an eminence above his associates. And from this vantage ground he was able to deal instruction to the reformed divines, and confusion to impostors. And at the present day, fanatics and impostors succeed only where men have lost sight of the supremacy and sufficiency of the written word. Luther having himself a clear perception of the line, between truth and falsehood in the case, reproved Melancthon for his timidity and hesitation. That learned divine had written to him for advice, before he left his Patmos; and he answered as follows:—

"You are my superior both in discernment and erudition, but I cannot commend your timidity, in regard to the prophets. In the first place, when they bear record of themselves, we ought not implicitly to believe them, but rather to try the spirits according to John's advice. As yet I hear nothing from them, which exceeds the imitative powers of Satan. Examine them whether they can produce any proof of a divine commission. For God never sent a prophet, who was not

called by a proper person, or authorized by special miracles, no not even his own Son. Their bare assertion of a divine afflatus, is not enough. Since God did not even choose to speak to Samuel, but with the sanction of Eli's authority. In the next place, I wish you to sift their spirit, and see whether they have experienced any internal distress of soul, the attacks of death and hell, and the comforts of the new birth unto righteousness. If you hear nothing from them but smooth tranquil and what they call devout religious contemplations, regard them not. \* \* \* Try them carefully, and listen not to a glorified Jesus, unless you find he was first crucified." Here we see that the superior discernment and discrimination of Luther as to the character of these impostors came from his own experience of the power of gospel truth. He assumed it as an axiom, that those, slain by the law, and then made alive by the gospel, who had been crucified to the world and its lusts, through the truth wrought into their experience, that such and such only are sure of having embraced truth; and such are sure to be no impostors.

Luther arrived home on Saturday evening; and the next morning the news flew like the wind: "Luther is come. Luther is to preach to day." The city was all in motion, and the church was filled to the utmost; Luther ascended the pulpit, and saw around him, the people that he had formerly led, as tender shepherd, but now alienated from him. Yet in the

spirit of a father, returning to his children and enquiring into their conduct, he told them what he had heard of them, and communicated appropriate instruction. He who stood before princes at Worms, now stood with equal effect, before the unearthly rage of the maddened prophets. His doctrine distilled as the dew; alienated minds felt its healing power, the fivers of disaffection were quenched. The false prophets, who but a few days before were regarded as the great power of God, now shrunk into insignificance.

In his preaching he dwelt especially upon the power of God's word, in order to correct the zeal of those who had decried the bible, and sought to promote reform by violent means. He said, I am willing to argue, preach and write: but I will not constrain any one. For faith is a voluntary act. Call to mind what I have already done. I stood up against the Pope, indulgences and papists; but without violence or tumult. I brought forward the word of God, I preached and wrote, and there I stopped. And whilst I laid me down and slept, or chatted with Amsdorf and Melancton, over a tankard of Wittemberg beer, the word which I had preached brought down the power of the Pope to the ground. So that never prince or emperor dealt it such a blow. For my part I did next to nothing; the power of the word did the whole business. Had I appealed to force, Germany might have been deluged with blood. But what would have been the consequence? Ruin and destruction of

soul and body. Accordingly I kept quiet, and let the word run through the length and breadth of the land. Know you what the devil thinks, when he sees men resort to violence, to spread the gospel. Seated behind the fires of hell, and folding his arms with malignant leer, Satan says, How good it is in yonder madmen to play into my hands. But only let him see the word of God circulating, and working its way in the field of the world, and his knees will smite each other, and he will be ready die of fear.

Luther continued his preaching from day to day, to vast assemblies. As to the effect, Schurff, the confidential agent of Frederick, wrote to that prince, after having heard Luther's sixth sermon, thus—Oh what joy has Doctor Martin's reappearance diffused among us! His words, through divine mercy, every day bring back some of our poor deluded people. It is clear, that the spirit of God is with him, and that his coming to Wittenberg was by God's special providence.

In nothing perhaps does the true greatness of Luther's soul more appear, than in the control which he had over the temper of the popular mind. For if he that rules his spirit, is better than he that takes a city, he that can so rule his own spirit, and so command the resources of his mind, as to be able to hush such a gale of popular fanaticism, and rule a thousand spirits moved to madness by the infernal spirit, stands highest on the roll of conquerors. It is vastly easier



to raise a storm of popular passion than to quell it "Don't you think Luther a wonderful teacher?" enquired one of his hearers. The other replied, "Ah I seem to be listening the voice of an angel." But his arrival at Wittemberg was not a matter of rejoicing to all. Carolstadt saw his own party dwindling, and fancied that this was the decline of the reformation, and he wore a face of sadness and dejection. Not able to arrest the ebbing tide, he yielded to the force of circumstances for a time, became apparently reconciled, and took his place again as a teacher in the university. Stubner was now abroad on a circuit, sowing his tares, and hearing of the havoc which Luther had made of his converts at Wittemberg, he hastened thither. The remnants of his adherents gathered around him, told him all that had been done, and asked, what they should do? He exhorted them to stand firm. And he and Cellary sought an interview with Luther. But Luther had no wish to meet them. He knew that men in their state of mind, are not to be reasoned out of their follies, and that they will endure nothing but that every one surrender at once, all his principles to their dictation. But being in a sense challenged, he could not wisely decline. A meeting took place, and he listened a while to Stubner setting forth his visions and revelations. And when the prophets were in high expectation, of hearing him the next moment declare his adhesion to their cause, he replied with a provoking calmness. that he saw nothing that is based upon

scripture in this, and that it was a mere tissue of fiction. At this Cellary raised his voice, trembling from head to foot, stuck the table in a passion, and exclaimed against Luther's remark, as an insult offered to a man of God. He replied, that Paul said, the signs of an apostle were wrought among the Corinthians, in miracles and mighty deeds; prove in like manner your apotleship by miracles. We will do it, replied Stubner. Luther rejoined,—The God whom I serve, will know how to bridle your gods. Stubner raised the unearthly glare of his maniac-eye, and in a solemn tone said; “Martin Luther, hear me, while I declare what is passing in your own soul. You are now thinking, that my doctrine is true.” Luther replied, “The Lord rebuke thee Satan.” And he told him, that was his thought at that moment. On this the prophets lost all self-command. They stamped and shouted aloud, The Spirt, the Spirit. Luther said, in contempt and cutting homeliness of phraze, I slap your spirit on the snout. Upon this they foamed and raved and drowned their own voices in the tumult. And here ended the interview, and with it the prophets' sojourn at Wittenberg, and also the conflict, so far as that place was concerned.

Carolstadt with his excesses, had mingled one important truth, which Luther was not prepared to receive; that is, that the presence of Christ in the sacrament was only spiritual and symbolical. Luther, though he had abolished the mass, and renounced the

grossest absurdities of transubstantiation, or of the idea of the bread being changed by the act of the priest consecrating it, into the real body of Christ; still held, that Christ's body and blood were somehow really present in the eucharist; but his idea is hardly understood by any but Lutherans, if indeed it be needful to make that exception. Carolstadt here had the truth, and so far the advantage of Luther. And in connexion the with maintainance of this truth, he took up, what in the circumstances seemed to Luther, a rash warfare against the use of images, and other like abuses in the church. These points separated the two reformers. And hence grew the distinction, between the German and the Swiss, or the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. And here we have an illustration, of the force of prejudice, turning aside the best minds, from the truth. But for Carolstadt and the odious connexion, into which he brought this truth, with his absurd ravings, Luther would not have rested in his unintelligible idea of consubstantiation, which from him has been perpetuated in the Lutheran connexion, after having bred disastrous contentions among the real friends of the reformation. Before this collision with Carolstadt, Luther's own mind had been predisposed to the correct view of this subject. As early as 1520, he said in a tract on the mass; I can every day enjoy the advantages of the sacraments, if I do but call to mind the word and promise of Christ, and with them feed and strengthen my faith. And in

1525, we hear him saying, that if any one, five years before could have proved to him, that there is the bread and wine only, in the sacrament, he would have done him the greatest service. This shows a leaning of his mind at that time towards the correct view. But soon Carolstadt took it up, and identified it with his vagaries, and associated it with the principles of the anabaptists. And these enthusiasts despised the outward ordinance of the supper, as they did the outward revelation. So soon as the symbolical import of the ordinance was lisped, Luther's mind revolted at once. He thought he saw in it another attempt to fritter away the force of the scriptures, by the spiritualizing process. This apprehension was very natural, in the circumstances; for this truth had gone into bad company and taken the bad name, of men inflamed, with hostility to the written word. And Luther would not listen to any attempt, to exhibit the symbolical import of the supper, lest he should countenance an attempt to displace the obvious import and divine authority of the bible. And though he erred in this instance, Providence overruled it for good. For had it not been for Luther's energetic resistance to the tendencies to mysticism, of which this opposition to Carolstadt was a part, the evil might have prevailed to arrest the reformation, with all the blessings which it had in store for the world.

But be that as it may, we now find Luther and Carolstadt in mutual conflict touching the sacrament and

confession and the use of images; and both conducting the controversy, in no desirable spirit. Luther's influence prevailed at Wittemberg; and Carolstadt, not finding there a favorable field, departed without so much as the form of resigning his seat, or even of giving notice of his intentions, and repaired to Orlamund. He procured the dismissal of the vicar there, and his own appointment as pastor of the church in his stead. And he entered upon the office, against the wishes of the Elector and of the university. Here he began to diffuse his doctrines in earnest. Relieved from the restraints of Luther's presence, his zeal against images rose to a flame. And he vented his bold appeals, suited to madden the minds of men in those agitated times. The people, thinking that they heard a second Elijah, proceeded to throw down the altars of Baal. The flame soon spread into the neighboring villages. The Elector interferred; but the peasants insisted, that they must obey God rather than man. Upon this he determined, to send Luther to allay the storm; probably inferring from Luther's great success, in quelling the tempest at Wittemberg, that he might have equal success at Orlamund. But the relations between Luther and Carolstadt had now become such, that Luther was essentially disqualified, for a peace-maker in the case. He had come to look upon Carolstadt as a fanatic, who would go all lengths of war against Christ himself, for the sake of notoriety. He had heard of his sighing to be as great as Lu-

ther, and thence discovering, that ambition was a leading element of his character, had no patience with him. And Carolstadt saw in Luther a troublesome rival coming to thwart his plans.

The account of this expedition was given in detail, by Reinhard, pastor of Jena and a partizan of Carolstadt, who afterwards in exile, shared the punishment of his excesses, and whose mind stung with resentments, was disqualified to give an impartial history of the affair. Luther says of the story, Martin Reinhard has published a most iniquitous account of my conduct at Orlamund, with a view to enhance the credit of Carolstadt, and disgrace me. In another letter he says, This little account of my transactions at Orlamund diverts me exceedingly, and with good reason, because I see, that men who pay no regard to truth and who are without conscience, are full of fears for themselves, and choose to be beforehand with the public. An anonymous publication containing such a mixture of lies with truth, calls for patience and forbearance, and not for an answer. To this protest of Luther, which ought wholly to discredit the account, Seckendorf adds his testimony, and says, that it was penned with malignant artifice, to the great disadvantage of Luther. And yet so excellent a writer as D' Aubigne rehearses this story of Reinhard, with only a hint in a note, that it may not be entitled to full credit.

This account, spitefully mingling truth with false-



hood, is as follows—Jena lay in the road to Orlamund. Arriving there August 23 Luther ascended the pulpit, the next day at 7 o' clock in the morning. He preached an hour and a half, to a numerous assembly against fanatics, rebels, breakers of images and despisers of the real presence, vehemently protesting against the innovations at Orlamund. He did not name Carolstadt but all knew whom he had in his eye. By accident or design, Carolstadt was present in the croud; and he lost no time in calling him to account. Luther was at dinner with the prior of Wittemberg; the burgomaster, the secretary and the pastor of Jena, and several officers, when a letter was handed to him from Carolstadt, requesting an interview. He turned to the bearer and said, "If Dr. Carolstadt wishes to see me, let him come in: if not I have no wish to see him." Carolstadt entered; his appearance created a sensation. Eager to see the two lions engage, most suspended their dinner, while the more timid turned pale, with apprehension. Carolstadt at Luther's invitation, took his seat opposite to him and said, "Dr. you have in your sermon to day, classed me with those that encourage revolt and assassination. I declare that such a charge is false." Luther replied; "I did not name you, but if the cap fits, you may wear it." After a pause Carolstadt said; "I am prepared to show, that in the doctrine of the sacrament, you have contradicted yourself, and that from the days of the apostles, no one has preached that doctrine so purely as I have

L. "Write then and establish your point." C. "I offer you a public discussion at Wittemberg or Erfurth, if you will promise me a safe conduct." L. "Never fear Doctor." C. You bind me hand and foot, and then you strike." L. Write against me—but openly, not in secret." C. "If I were assured, that you are in earnest, I would do so." L. "Set about it—here take this florin." C. Where is it? I accept the challenge," At this Luther thrust his hand into his pocket, and producing a florin said, as he gave it to him—"Take it and attack me like a man." Carolstadt holding up the florin turned to the assembly, and said—"Dear Brethren, this to me is the pledge, that I have authority to write against Luther. I call you all to witness this." Then bending the florin, so that he could know it, he put it in his purse, and held out his hand to Luther. Luther pledged him, and he returned the civility. Luther said—"The more vigorous your attacks the better." Carolstadt answered—"If I fail the fault shall be mine," Again they shook hands and Carolstadt retired.

Luther set forward to Orlamünd, and there assembled the council and the church, and said, that neither the university nor the Elelector will acknowledge Carolstadt as your pastor. The treasurer of the town replied—If he is not our pastor, Paul is a false teacher, and your writings are false; for we have chosen him. Here Carolstadt entered, and going straight to Luther said, "Dear Doctor, if you will allow me, I will give

you an introduction." L. "You are my antagonist; I have fixed you by the pledge of a florin." Carolstadt replied—I will be your antagonist, so long as you oppose God and truth." Luther said—"Leave the room I cannot allow you to be present." Carolstadt said—This is an open meeting. Luther then spoke to his attendants—Go put the horses to, I can have nothing here to say to Carolstadt. He rose from his seat, and then Carolstadt withdrew. Luther then continued his debate with the town-council, and the assembled people to no effect. When he returned to his carriage the people enraged, insulted him, and told him to be gone, and wished him to break his neck. After going to another town, where the disorders reigned, and preaching there, he returned without accomplishing his object.

As this account was given by a prejudiced witness, we here subjoin that of Seckendorf.—At the suggestion of the Elector, Luther came to Jena, where were partizans of Muncer and Carolstadt. He preached there, especially against what Muncer taught and did, and more especially against the forcible ejection of images. Carolstadt was present, and at noon a fierce dispute arose between him and Luther. Luther acquitted him of the charge of partnership in the Muncer-tumults. But in his doctrine as to the supper, in which he gloried, that he alone since the apostles, had found the truth, and in his violence in the destruction of images, he had no sympathy. And he gave

him a golden florin, in pledge, that he would defend what he asserted. Many things were said on both sides, with great vehemence. But Carolstadt showed the most passion; for which he apologised, attributing it to a fault of his nature, and professing, that though he spoke with warmth, he was not in anger. While at Jena, Luther received a letter from the people at Orlamund, upbraiding him for his treatment of Carolstadt, and of the subject in dispute. It was written in a coarse rustic style, but the thoughts were so much above the simplicity of peasants, that he imputed the authorship to Carolstadt. Soon he went to Orlamund in company with the chaplain of the court of Weymar and in presence of Carolstadt and his hearers, he severely censured the citizens for their abusive letter. And he refused an invitation to preach, and was glad to escape the violence of a mob, set on by Carolstadt. And he left them under showers of reproaches and imprecations.

Respecting the finale of this mission of peace Luther says—I saw very clearly what sort of seed this fine teacher had been sowing at Orlamund, and had good reason to congratulate myself, that I had slipped away from them with my life, and was not covered with stones and dirt.

To prevent misunderstanding let it be here remarked, that it was no part of Luther's design, to defend the worship of images against these iconoclasts. On this subject he said, "In the affair of pulling down

images, I could easily pass by his excesses, provided the matter ended there. For I have already done more by my writings towards the destruction of image-worship, than his intemperate proceedings will ever do. But the mischief is, that he teaches people that unless they do this they are no christians. This is language not to be borne. Paul says that an idol is nothing in the world; and of course it is nothing, whether it stand or fall. Why then are the consciences of christians tortured, by things in which christianity does not consist? \* \* \* \* When I met him at Jena, he almost persuaded me, not to confound his spirit with that deadly, bloody spirit of the anabaptists. But when I came among his flock, I was not at loss, to know what seed he had been sowing."

Carolstadt remained at Orlamund after this, and wrote to Frederic, letters full of bitterness against Luther. And he instigated his hearers to the same, and to defend their violence, in the destruction of images. At length, Frederic's patience was exhausted and he expelled Carolstadt from his dominions; rejecting the earnest intercessions of his people, on his behalf. He afterwards kept up the ferment, by writing letters to his people, which he was wont to subscribe—"Carolstadt, unheard, unconvicted, banished by Martin Luther." For the the reading of these letters, the people were assembled by the tolling of the bell. Germany was now filled with complaints against Luther, and exaggerated representations of Carolstadt's suffer-

ings added oil to the flames of popular excitement. His banishment though done without the advice or consent of Luther, was yet laid to his charge, and it gave a handle to those who wanted one against his cause. In a letter to Amsdorf he says—Matters are so changed, that I, who should have been a martyr myself, am making martyrs of others. Yet this imputation troubled him little. For after Carolstadt went to Strasburg, Luther wrote to the people there; “I really rejoice, that he has been banished from our parts, and I most seriously regret, that he has had an opportunity of showing his wild and seditious spirit among you. \* \* \* \* However I own, that if I had been the Duke of Saxony, he would never have been banished”

After his banishment he went first to Strasburg and thence to Basle. At the first place he employed himself in writing several tracts, venting new reproaches against the Elector and Luther and his colleagues. He stigmatized them as the flatterers of the pope and temporizers in the work of reform. Thence he went to Basle, and there he procured the printing of his tracts, without the knowledge of any but the anabaptists. The police arrested and imprisoned the publishers; and sale was prohibited also at Zurich. Yet Œcolampadius, then the reformed preacher at Basle, and even Zuingle thought that Carlstadt's view of the sacrament, though unhappily expressed in those tracts, was substantially correct. To these publications Luther replied with a vengeance, in a book entitled,—

"Against the Celestial Prophets." After spending five months in exile, Carolstadt changed his mind so far as to seek a reconciliation with Luther, and wrote a sort of penitential letter to Spalatinus, the Elector's secretary and chaplain, asking his interference in the case. This appeal to that sentiment of generosity of which Luther was so susceptible, was not in vain. At once he interceded with the Elector, to permit the exile to enter his dominions, in order to hold a friendly conference with Luther—though judging from the insolent style of his letter, he had little hope of him. The Elector rejected the petition, and said that he did not choose to grant safe conducts for such purposes. Since Luther might confer with him out of his jurisdiction, with more hope of a reconciliation.

The exile now wandered from place to place, in the upper part of Germany. Pausing at Rotenburg, he raised tumults there, by moving the people to violence against images. Respecting these proceedings, Luther said,—I have not been able to get a safe conduct for Carolstadt: and so he continues to vent his furious declamations against me. While his banishment continued, the civil wars raised by Muncer and his party, which are to be described in the sequel, had their final explosion. And a state of things followed, which was exceedingly perilous to Carolstadt, suspected of a partnership with the authors of the war. Public vigilance was awake, and the scrutiny was severe upon such men as he. Many in various places,



were arrested on suspicion and imprisoned, among whom were some evangelical preachers. Carolstadt once escaped the police, by being let down by the wall of a city in a basket. Reduced now to the last extremities, he and his wife incessantly entreated Luther and the Elector for leave to return to their country. He offered to clear himself from all charges of being concerned in the late rebellions, and to suffer punishment if he failed to clear himself. He wrote a tract setting forth his innocence, and sent it to Luther with a letter, requesting his aid to publish it, and in establishing his innocence. The appeal touched Luther's sense of justice, and the submissive attitude of his former friend, and now his adversary in distress, wrought powerfully upon his generous nature. He at once published the tract, and declared, that though he differed from him, he would not disappoint the expectations of one who had cast himself upon his mercy, rather than fly for refuge to those, who had instigated him against him. He therefore called upon the magistrates, in the name of common justice and of christianity, to give a fair hearing to an unfortunate fugitive. And he laid stress upon the fact, that he was willing to submit to a fair trial, and he had not been guilty of any overt act of rebellion. After this Carolstadt sent another letter to Luther, professing, that in what he had written about the Lord's supper, he never intended to express his settled conviction; but he wrote only for the purpos of eliciting truth by

discussion. Luther accepted the apology, but reminded him, that he should not teach a doubtful matter, for a certainty, and the people should not receive for truth, that about which their teacher is in doubt. For in matters of faith, the mind is not to be in a state of doubt, but to take hold of the truth so strong, as to be willing to die a thousand deaths, rather than renounce it.

But after much entreaty, and after the death of the Elector, Luther succeeded to procure from John, the brother and successor of Frederic, permission for him to return, and live in a small country-village, about a mile from Wittemberg. Upon this Luther says,—By earnest and constant prayers, I have at last obtained leave from the prince, contrary to the advice of the whole court, for Carolstadt to return. May God be pleased to bring the man to a right state of mind at last. Yesterday we baptised, or rather re-baptised one of his children; the sponsors were Jonas, Melancton and my Ketha. Who would have suspected, that those who have reviled our baptism, as fit only for dogs, would now have petitioned to have it administered to their children, by their adversaries! Whether they are sincere or not is known only to God. From the hint which Luther here gives that this child had been baptised while its father was an anabaptist, we should think, that sect did not at first, wholly and uniformly renounce infant baptism. Their policy seems rather to have been this—by all means to unchurch

all existing churches; and their denial of all baptisms received in infancy, that is most that were received at all, was but a means to that end.

Good policy as well as humanity seems to been concerned in the recall of Carolstadt. For he would do less mischief, while at home an object of governmental clemency, and restrained from preaching, than if he were abroad gathering sympathy, as a victim of the vengeance of princes, and scattering seeds of sedition. After his return, he made a public recantation of his offensive views touching the sacrament. This surrender of an important truth, a truth, which afterwards, he in a change of circumstances again avowed, must in charity be put to the score of a mind broken with calamity. He after this connected himself with the divines in Switzerland, with whom he agreed touching the points of the sacramental controversy. He was appointed professor of divinity and preacher at Basle; and about fifteen years after this, in 1541, he died,

There is reason to believe, that he profited by his adversity, and attained a truly christian spirit. For his friend Bucer, writing to Zuingli in 1530, says—"Carolstadt formerly used to be somewhat savage, but persecutions and heavy misfortunes have so broken his spirit, and the man has now such worthy views of Christ, that I am confident you will admire him.

In forming an estimate of his character as it was, in his controversy with Luther, it will be safe to follow the candid and cautious Melancthon. He says—"Car-

oldstadt first raised the tumult about the sacrament. He was a man of savage disposition, and of no genius or learning, or even common sense; a man so far from having any marks of being influenced by the holy Spirit, that I never knew him even to understand or practice the ordinary duties of humanity. Nay, he has shown clear signs of an unholy temper. All his views savor of sedition and Judaism. He rejected every law made by the gentiles, and held that civil questions should be decided by the law of Moses. From the first he embraced with all his might, the fanatical doctrine of the anabaptists, when Stork attempted to sow the seeds of sedition in Germany. And he made a stir about the sacrament, entirely from dislike of Luther, and not in the least from a pious conviction, that he himself was right." What he here says about Carlstadt's learning, must be understood in a comparative sense. For Luther speaks of his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.

Carlostadt had such connexions with the anabaptists, that his history is theirs. And yet convenience of order requires it to be set forth thus distinct, before we give the narrative of the proceedings of Muncer and Stork, the fathers of the sect.

A natural reflection upon the subject of these paragraphs, is upon the power of prejudice, in preventing our apprehension of truth. Carlstadt had taken up an important truth, that of the symbolical import of the supper. And this truth he held in unrighteous-

ness, and in unlovely connexion with the come-outisms of the day. Yea he defended it with very insufficient reasons, and in a very wicked spirit. And Luther who before had been predisposed to recieve it, now turned from it in disgust. And from this, grew all the strifes of the sacramental controversy, which tore the bowels of the reformation, and perpetuated among the Lutherans, the error of consubstantiation, resting like an incubus upon the church.

It therefore does not follow of course, that one is a real benefactor, because that he holds and strenuously maintains a beneficent principle. The question is, Does his life, deportment and general spirit recommend his principles? Does he wisely hold and handle the truth, with a spirit that attracts and wins the approbation of men?

### CHAPTER III.

When we contemplate any remarkable phenomenon, the mind instinctively enquires for its cause. And it may be well here, to glance at some of the circumstances, which facilitated the introduction of this scourge of the human race. Here we invite particular observation of the events to be narrated, with reference to the influence which the reformation exerted, upon these disorders. Whatever connexion the fanatic spirit had with the rise of the reformation, the enterprize of the reformers, so far from being the cause of the fanaticism, was its most effectual antidote. It was Luther's principles, wrought into his experience, and quickening his spiritual discernment, which enabled him to sift the chaff from the wheat. This discrimination came into use, before he left his Patmos. And it discovered itself in the advice, which he gave to Melancthon, as to the way of trying the spirits of the impostors; as we have already related. Luther detected the false experience of others, by applying, as a touch-stone, those truths, whose redeeming power

he had felt. It was the light of the doctrines of the reformation, by which he saw through the mask, worn by those hypocrites, and saved the goodly work of reformation, from being laid waste, by hordes of spiritual Goths and Vandals.

One cause which fearfully facilitated the action of those disorganizers was the deep and wide spread ignorance of the people ; and more especially their ignorance of religious truth. The mass of the people had indeed been thoroughly roused, by the breaking in of the morning of the new era. But had not had time, in the space of six years, to acquire any thing like an adequate knowledge of the gospel-system. And the depths of popular ignorance, existing when Luther began, can hardly be conceived. There were universities for a few of the rich and nobles, and convents for the inglorious sloth of the monks, but no education for the people. The millions of an uneducated population presented an aggregate of mind, dark, chaotic and stagnant. No lights had been put into the hands of the people, because their masters spiritual and temporal preferred a blindfolded people. And the false prophets summoned them to action in the name of God and freedom, lashing their blind passions up to a phrenzy, stimulating their resentments of past injury, and present oppression, and appealed to their cupidity and lust of plunder. And it is not strange, that so many people, so ignorant, were dupes of the artifice. "Where no vision is the people perish."



And especially were they ignorant of religious doctrine, and unable to detect the arts of deceivers. Up to that time, they had been made to feel it to be a superfluous labor to think for themselves; and so had become incapacitated to do it. Just cut loose from the keepers of their thoughts, and the leading strings on which they had relied, they had not a command of their own powers. And those crafty instruments of Satan snatched the vacant rein, and led them whither they would. Minds that had intelligently received the doctrine of Christ and of Luther, could detect the artifice, so adapted so deceive if it were possible the very elect. But Luther's doctrine had but just begun to exert its power. And the only wonder is, that in so short a time, it could have had so wide a propagation, and exerted so much conservative power.

Another advantage which those deceivers had, lay in the adaptation of the leading instruments of the work, the end to be reached. They had among them men fitted for all parts of their work, though the aggregate of their learning was exceeding small. In here and there an instance, a man of considerable acquirements, like Carolstadt, was led into the movement by his ambition, or his feuds with the reformers. But these were less efficient than illiterate adventurers, excelling them in violence and overbearing impudence. Carolstadt the doctor of philosophy, shone indeed in that galaxy, but with a luster inferior to that of John the tailor, and prophet-king. The most effi-

tient actors in this drama were minds, in which were mingled the passions incident to the most ignorant, a natural vein of superstition, as a means of reaching the sympathies of the superstitious, a shewdness in arts of imposture, a tact in reaching the springs of popular passion, some of the worse characteristics of the Yankee pedler of wooden nutmegs, and all these qualities penetrated with the fires of an enthusiastic zeal; such were the elements of that storm. Minds of such furniture, with a few men of some education acting as humble auxiliaries, constituted a corps of operators, just fitted to the work to be done.

But much of their success lay in the ecclesiastical and social abuses, of which they took advantage. The German peasants were literal slaves, attached to the soil. The feudal system was in all its vigor, the property of the land was held by the nobility: and the cultivators of the soil were near to absolute slavery. In some respects their condition was less desirable, than that of slaves at the south. In some parts of Germany, they were so wholly in the hands of their masters, as to be under personal and domestic slavery. In other provinces, as in Bohemia and Lusace, peasants were bound to remain on the lands, to which they belonged, and as the fixtures of the real estate, were transferred with it. Even in Suabia and the countries on the Rhine, where their condition was most tolerable, the peasants not only paid full rents for the land, but if they wished to change their place of abode,

or to follow other business, they were required to purchase the privilege. And all grants of land to peasants expired at their death, without descending to the children. When a peasant died, his landlord took possession of the best of his cattle and other property. And if his heirs obtained a renewal of the grant, it was by the payment of a large sum, called a fine. These exactions though grievous, were borne with patience, because they were customary and ancient, and the poor people had known no other way. But when the progress of elegance and luxury, as well as the changes in the arts of war, came to increase the expence of government it became necessary to lay heavier burdens of taxes upon the people. These burdens being new, seemed intolerable. These taxes were laid chiefly upon beer and wine, which were regarded as the necessaries of life. And this most deeply affected the peasantry, and well nigh drove them to despair. To valor inspired by resentments of this kind, the Swiss owed their liberty, gained more than a century before. And at times less remote, the same reason had produced rebellions in several German states. But a few years, that is some fifteen or twenty, before the dawn of the reformation, the spirit of popular discontent had a violent eruption in Holland. There and in the Belgic provinces, an insurrection broke forth, and was encouraged by the king of France. An army was collected of the peasants, who went out under banners, on which were painted bread and

cheese, an affecting symbol of their wants and the purpose of their enterprize. And hence the league was called, the league of Casembrots, that is in English, the Cheese-and-breads. They had collected six or seven thousand men, and might have easily raised an army of thirty or forty thousand. But the government soon brought a force against them, and subdued them before they had time to collect their full forces. But for that timely movement, the whole tract of the Rhine, even as far as Mentz, would have been overrun with anarchy and blood.

Then in 1503, about fourteen years before the reformation, a league of peasants or slaves was formed on the Rhine, about the city of Spire. This league was called Bundschuch, or league of shoes, having the same object, deliverance from slavery and from oppressive burdens. Then again in 1514, only two years before Luther commenced his work, the region of Wurtemberg became the scene of the operations of a conspiracy, called the league of poor Conrad, because, headed by a farmer by the name of Conrad. The special intent of this conspiracy was, to destroy the nobility, the bishops and the clergy, of whose avarice, they complained as the cause of their oppressions. They took possession of several towns; and had not the government exercised great diligence and promptitude, events would soon have come to a terrible crisis. But now by a prudent easing of burdens and the banishment of a few, the commotions were hush-

ed. About the same time, a sedition for a like cause broke out in Austria, and with greater bloodshed. In the year 1515, the very year before the beginning of the reformation, a terrible commotion arose in the districts of Carinthia and Hungary. Two thousands of the rebel slaves were slain, and after shedding torrents of blood, the people were put down but not relieved from oppression.

Such was the intolerable condition of the German peasants, and such their tendencies to revolt, when the Celestial Prophets commenced operations among them. It was as if there were throughout the southern states of this confederacy, a universal preparation for a slave-insurrection, and as if a set of enthusiasts, taking advantage of the intolerable grievances of the slaves, to advance their own schemes, should go abroad over the whole field, fanning every rising flame of discontent, and igniting every train that had been laid for an explosion. So that it would be a mistake to attribute the originating of that insurrection-spirit, either to the reformers or to the Celestial Prophets. Indeed the opening of the reformation for a time, so diverted the public mind from a sense of its grievances, and so absorbed the attention of an astonished people, as to have hushed the seditious discontents for the time. And yet in another view, and by an indirect influence, it opened the way for these discontents to have a more loud and effectual expression. The religious liberty which the reformers proclaimed,

and to which the gospel opened by them invited the world, caused the oppressed the more deeply to realize their burdens, both religious and secular, and more keenly to resent their wrongs. The religious discussions gave a new impulse, yea a resurrection to men's natural desire for liberty, and so lighted up a flame which kindled the popular mind against all forms of oppression. This state of things secured an open ear of the people for the false apostles of liberty and religion. And when they lifted the standard, and offered themselves as champions, and asserters of the the freedom of the people they were very naturally welcomed by thousands, unsuspecting of any sinister intent. Their words were like gun-powder, thrown upon burning coals, and a terrible explosion ensued. The multiplied wrongs of the people were their capital, their stock in trade. And had they used it for the people, had they redeemed one half of their benevolent promises, they might have stood high on the list of benefactors, and recieved the plaudits, where they have recieved the execrations of succeeding generations.

They took advantage of the sufferings of the people not to acquire a power to redress them, not to execute judicious measures of reform. But they took advantage of the sighs of the oppressed, to fill the sails of their ambition, to secure the means of elevating themselves, and of gratifying their hatred of those in stations above them, by pulling them down. Carol-

stadt in the commencement of his wild career, distinctly confessed, that his object was to become as noted and respected as Luther was. And of the other leaders of that enterprize, if we were to judge them by their fruits, and by the manifestations of their general spirit, it would be no uncharitableness to say, that they cared nothing how much the people suffered, if they could use them as instruments of a perilous experiment for their own advantage. Their tender mercies for the people did not make them careful of spilling the people's blood. They professed a great horror of slavery, and great sympathy for the slaves, and yet were willing to expose these slaves, these objects of their tender mercies, to wholesale butchery in the desperate game of their own ambition. Their real intent was made too manifest, in the manner in which they used their power, after they had acquired it. As to this, Luther in one of his letters to Frederic, said,—“They say, it is the Spirit which impells them. But that is an evil spirit which produces no better fruit than the pillage of convents and churches. The veriest robbers on earth might do the same.” In another case he said,—“Their cry was, The Spirit, the Spirit; but surely I for one will not follow, whither their spirit leads them. May God in his mercy preserve us from a church, in which there are only such saints!”

Thus we see, that human nature is so depraved, as to admit of carrying on such an infernal work, under



pretexts so holy. And what has been may be again. We have in this generation the groaning of the prisoner, and the tears of the enslaved, to challenge our sympathies, and draw us into the field of reforms and into the work of emancipation. And now it is very possible, that the impulses of an unholy ambition may come into play. It is possible that professed reformers in our day, may have made the poor slaves their clients, in order to use them as stalking horses to compass most wicked designs, and so to shelter their own iniquity under the just complaints of others. Without affirming we leave the reader to form his own judgement, by the facts which we shall exhibit, whether we have not in our day, a race of reformers, in the spirit and power of Muncer and Stork. Can we see no traits of resemblance, between those worthies and some now abroad, who take shelter under just the same pretexts, to drive a nefarious enterprize in the teeth of all that is sacred in religion and all that as worth preserving in our civil institutions? We are not called upon trust every man's professions; but we are rather to try the spirits, whether they be of God. And if while they profess to seek emancipation of slaves, they in truth are scheming for their personal ambition, or to gratify a hatred of the religious order and institutions of the country, and thus abusing the cause of the slaves in identifying it with infidel schemes, no law of charity requires us to shut our eyes as to facts, and credit pretentious contrary to facts.

But among the elements which generated that sedition in Germany, not the least was the contagious power of vicious enthusiasm. We term it vicious enthusiasm, to avoid the appearance of condemning all forms of enthusiasm. It is good always to be zealously affected in a good thing. And zeal cannot be excessive, when it is kindled in view of truth and eternal realities. And if the word enthusiasm express a high degree of zeal, without regard to its quality, it is possible to have a holy as well as a vicious enthusiasm. The power of one under the influence of enthusiasm, whether right or wrong, is for the time greatly increased. And this power incident to enthusiasm has its special field for successful exertion, where popular ignorance is deep and dense. Enthusiasm in the good sense is an essential ingredient of true eloquence. And the eloquence in which this quality predominates, carries all before it, when it comes to bear upon ignorant masses of people. The vehemence of one mind uttering thoughts that breathe and words that burn arrests the sympathies and passions of other minds, and carries captive the reason, whether the cause be good or bad. But when to the power inherent in enthusiastic eloquence, there is added the mysterious power of a pretence of a direct and supernatural mission from heaven, the imposters's power for mischief with some minds, is vastly increased. Melancthon's non-plus, experienced when the prophets of Zuickau stood before him, demanding a reverent hearing in

the name of God, was but a faint picture of the state of perplexity and awe into which less informed minds must have been thrown by the assaults of the bold pretenders to prophetic powers. The man in whose soul the fires of such a fanaticism are kindled, utters himself with a boldness, vehemence and power peculiar to himself, and often reaching what is no mean imitation of the sublimities of a true prophet. Fanaticism stirs deeply the fountains of feeling, and puts the imagination in vigorous play, and not seldom begets a grandeur of conception and a force of expression, far above the mind's ordinary power. Just as the maniac utters his phrenzies, in terms seemingly inspired. As Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, so the extacy of the half delirious pretender to inspiration, impresses weak and indiscriminating minds, like a real prophet uttering oracles of God. And the authors of the movement, which we are about to describe, went forth among an ignorant people, uttering themselves in extacies of mock inspiration, and torrents of flaming denunciation. The sympathy, passion and imagination of the multitude were overpowered, and their reason dethroned. Yea they came forth with such power, that the cool and clear headed Melancthon was once brought to a stand. Here then is another spring of the great success of those false prophets.

Still another was found in that, the bounds that the Spirit of inspiration has set to its own operations, were little known even by the reformers. If it had

been a principle universally recieved, that when the canon of scripture was completed, and put into the hands of the church fully authenticated, God thereafter would give out no commissions, for any man to declare new and authorititive revelations; there would have been an effectual check, of this flood of fanaticism. That single truth, had it been known and generally recieved, had saved the pages of history from blotting, in bearing the chronicles of the Celestial Prophets. But this truth even the reformers were slow of heart to recieve.

† The truth is, that Romanism had settled deep in the public mind the persuasion, that the power of performing miracles and recieving new revelations was a standing prerogative of the church. And this error at so early a stage of the reformation, had not wholly lost its hold of the most enlighthened minds. And herein the reformation was exposed to be marred, by such beasts of prey, as Satan sent for the purpose. Nor indeed is this error even now, wholly excluded from the Protestant world. There is a sprinkling of it every where, in minds predisposed to fanaticism; and it is from this fact, that fanatics find much encouragement. For hardly a fanatic can be found, of any sect who does not, either in theory or in fact, claim additional revelations.

And some readers here will naturally raise the inquiry, If the gospel does give a warrant to exclude every pretence of a new revelation? And whether

the fact that the canon of scripture is complete, be a sufficient refutation of all such pretences? And it is well here to digress a little, upon what the gospel does teach on this subject. It is clear, that it gives no warrant to expect such a continuance of the spirit of prophecy, unless that warrant is had in that prophecy of Joel, quoted by Peter in his Pentecostal sermon. This is in these terms—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens will pour out in those days my spirit, and they shall prophesy."

The question is, whether these words warrant the belief, that prophecy was to continue in the church till the end of time. It was customary with ancient prophets to describe the offices and privileges of christians, by imagery taken from offices in high esteem among Jews. So offices of spiritual worship and the privileges of the clearer light of the new testament, are depicted with such figures, as that of ascending the mountain of the Lord's house, building an altar to him, offering incense and a pure offering, sacrificing victims, and the like. Such a form of speech is used by Joel, when setting forth the abundance of divine knowledge, to be had under the gospel-dispensation. The assertion that there would be prophecies under the new economy, though fulfilled to the letter, as far as

the first age was concerned, is yet the mere drapery of the picture of the more general truth, that God's revelation and the spread of its knowledge would be more complete under the gospel. And Peter in quoting this text, found in the illuminations of that day, an instance and earnest of the fulfilment of that general prediction. Mark the context. He says, Repent and be baptised, every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost, for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off &c. Will any one say that an actual gift of prophecy is here pledged to all that believe? Yet the words taken literally import as much. And so Joel's prophecy if taken literally, would import, that all christians would be prophets.

The fact, that we have a revelation complete for all purposes of such a work, makes all additional inspirations useless. And it is not to be believed, that God will do a useless work. When the whole new testament as authenticated by miracles, had been given to the church, prophecy thereafter was a superfluous work. All that was wanted, in order to all needful light, was with a proper spirit to search the scriptures. Now what occasion has the church for prophets? Is it to teach any thing the bible does not teach? Or is it to teach in a better manner? This would imply that God's work, that He pronounced perfect, needs mending. Such ideas prostrate, at a blow, the authority of the bible. For if we receive it as a revelation from

God, we credit the authority of God who in the bible testifies, that it speaks the wisdom of God among them that are perfect, that it opens to view the mysteries, into which the angels have desired to look, that it makes known to principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God, that it is able to make us wise unto salvation, and to make a man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good work. And what more do we want, or can we have, in the way of a revelation? He who wishes for a wisdom transcending that of the bible, that is, to be wise above what is written, wishes for another gospel, and falls under the malediction pronounced upon such. These new prophets, you say declare things new and not contained in the bible. Do they? Then Paul has left a word for them—"Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, . . . let him be accursed.

Search through the productions of all the prophets, that have figured since the canon of scripture was finished, and what do you find that clearly deserves to be added to the bible? What, that is worth preserving, and that was not substantially taken from the bible? You will invariably find such pretended revelations to be, a compound of conceptions borrowed from the bible, with wild ravings, superstitious crudities, puerile fables, and these wrought up with the foam of grandiloquence. Thus has Providence illustrated the folly of all such attempts to mend his word.



Nor are such extra revelations needed as means of explaining the scriptures. The bible is not a revelation, if it cannot be understood, without new acts of revelation. Those willing to search, and compare scripture with scripture, and withal, willing to receive and obey the truth, and seek the guidance of the holy Spirit, will not fail to find in the bible all that is needful to life and godliness. Nor do the scriptures themselves warrant us to seek any miraculous means of their illustration. In the apocalypse, the most difficult of all the prophecies, we are not directed to go to new prophets for a key to the vision. But we are told that, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear and keep the things contained in this book." Thus we are told, the sense must be got by hearing and reading. Then look at that farago of trash insipidity and nonsense, made out by the general mass of the productions of the pretenders to inspiration, since the age of the apostles. Is not here presumptive evidence, that God intends to pour contempt on all such pretences to inspiration.

But groundless as this notion is, it held the people with great tenacity. After Protestantism came in, to re-enthroned the bible, as a sufficient revelation, and infallible rule of faith, the reformed were slow in completing their conception of this their fundamental principle. For more than a century after their work begun, some of their best minds were brought not seldom to a stand, as was Melancthon, in view of the impos-

ing pretences of false prophets. No less a person than the learned Jurieu, whom the Papists called the Goliath of the Protestants, a man probably not surpassed in learning by one of his cotemporaries, and in an age of profound scholars, to wit the century next after that of the reformation, even he was so taken in, with some of this class of impostors, as to have left a very favorable testimony respecting them. For the pretenders to inspiration were not confined to the sect of anabaptists nor to the age of the reformers. One of the prophets wondered at by Jurieu, was Nicholas Drabicius, a native of Strausnitz, in Moravia in 1587. He was a Protestant preacher at Drakotutz. But persecutions compelled him to flee to Hungary, where he followed the tailor's trade for a living. Here he fell into habits of intemperance and dissoluteness. But at the age fifty, he determined to retrieve his fortunes by a new enterprize; and so assumed the prophet. He put forth his first visions in 1638, with no success. But at length he succeeded to raise the vulgar curiosity, and finally his bold appeals and his heavy denunciations of the reigning powers of Austria, and his confident predictions of the downfall of Papacy, so much an object of popular desire, secured for him the ear of the people. And at one time his reputation was such, that his word could appal the heart and palsy the arm of the bravest generals. To show by what means this sort of prophets made their impression, we here give a specimen of his grandiloquence:—

“Hear all ye nations of the earth, all ye inhabitants of the world, small and great, poor and rich attend! I Nicholas Drabicius was sojourning in the little town of Lednitz, in the jurisdiction of the Most Illustrious Lord, George Racocius, Prince of Transylvania, of that name the first, and there in company with other pious exiles, I served my Christ in the extremes of poverty and tears for fifteen years. Here in the year 1643, it pleased the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, so to advance me a worm of the dust, yet chosen according to the good pleasure of his will, that by me as it were his last trumpet, he might utter the last will of God to the nations peoples and tongues of the whole earth. And by me he commands, that all kings, princes, counts and all the powers of the earth east, west, north and south, deal with the Pope of Rome as with the Harlot of Babylon; that all friends of that idolatry may perish, and the light may shine on Turks, Tartars, Jews and all other Gentiles, under the sun. . . . Know ye therefore, know all the nations and tongues of the whole earth, high and low rich and poor, learned and ignorant, whoever has the fear of God and the use of reason,—The discourses which I have written with tears, now of grief and then of joy, have not been mine, proceeding from my will, genius, or judgement, but from the mouth of God the Creator, God the Redeemer and God the Sanctifier, and as clearly presented to my mind and memory, as if they were communicated by another person. And I

have the most entire confidence in these communications, having by various indubitable proofs, made it certain, that the holy and blessed Trinity will acknowledge my predictions, and that the event will verify them; not in time and manner that you or I may purpose, but in the hour of judgement, determined by the will of his majesty. For it must always remain true, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. And after having well considered the subject, I declare to all gainsayers, that I call them to witness this day, and tomorrow, and will do it as long as I live, and in my dying day and theirs, and in the day of that last tremendous judgement, and in the bright appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,—I say I call them to witness in the presence of the purity of God most high and most true, who has no respect of persons, who alone is the Judge of the quick and dead, judging not after the sight of the eyes nor after the hearing of the ears, but judging the poor with judgement. And I call them to witness in the presence of seraphim and cherubim and all the hierarchy of heaven, in the presence of patriarchs and apostles, and of the fathers, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Bernard and the rest, in presence of the martyrs, Wickliff, Huss, Jerome and the rest, in presence of the holy reformers, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin and the succeeding lights in the church. Full of hope towards God, that whoever of you O men may condemn me, the least of all servants

of Christ, and also condemn my work, which I have laboriously and obediently performed, yet God will not condemn me nor my discouoses. Neither will the angels who are always present with me as witnesses, nor will my own conscience, than which I have nothing dearer in life, except it be God and his holy word. Bowing my knee before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and praying that the work which he has begun in us he will never forsake, but will preserve me and thee, and all engrafted upon the stock of Christ, and cause us at death not to come into condemnation, but to pass into life. So to me and to you may the Ruler of heaven, earth and sea be propitious, yea God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Spirit, blessed forever and ever. Amen."

The above mass of verbiage is a sample of the style of those prophets; though coming from an educated man, it is much above the ordinary productions of the class, who were styled, "the Celestial Prophets." Seeing as we do in our days, the much less plausible fabrications of the Mormons involving thousands of victims, and remembering that in those times, the religious world, in the midst of strange events and revolutions were quite prepared to expect new revelations, we can hardly wonder, that pretensions so imposing were so much credited. But there was one capital difficulty affecting these oracles, events would contradict them,

Take a specimen from this same Drabicius. In his

twenty third Revelation, this Seer tells us, that God instructed him as follows,—Go to the Prince [of Transylvania] and tell him, that your Creator and his has sent you to him, to assemble his whole army, and anoint and proclaim him king of the whole earth. And commence the solemnity with a sermon on this verse, “Yet have I set my king, on my holy hill of Zion.” This done, take some oil of balsam, which you will find in the palace of the Prince, and in presence of the whole people pour it upon his head. And then the Prince will assemble his lords and command them to prepare a crown, and appoint a day for coronation, before the whole world. And then whatever armies come to oppose him, he shall with a terrible destruction, clear away, as he would the wood and stones impeding his march.

This prophecy, so magnificent in its conception, only needed truth and verification by the event, to make it just the thing. But as if he really believed himself, the prophet went straight to the Prince, but was not admitted to see him. Word was sent him through the chaplain, that the Prince was now at peace with the Emperor, having no wish for war, and if the prophet wished to return home, he might do it. He did it; and soon the Prince died, and the vision dissolved.

These are the best specimens of a class of prophecies, that abounded for a century and a half after the dawn of the reformation. The fact that the world was then so susceptible of such impostures, gave the

the Celestial Prophets a great advantage. The whole subject of new prophecies was seen through such a mist, as inspired men with awe, and made them speak with caution. It is instructive to see how such a well furnished mind, as that of Witsius, at a later date speaks of it; repeating the sage counsel of Gamaliel, he says,—

“My view is, that these men are to be left to the judgement of God; and that no necessity is laid upon me, to determine, whether they have wickedly feigned all these things,—which charity forbids us to suspect,—or whether they were illusions of fancy, caused either by melancholly or some other like morbid influence, or whether there were something really divine, mixed with melancholly illusions. Yet I trust that God will not impute it to me as a crime, if content with the scriptures, I leave all more recent prophecies to be confirmed or refuted by the event, and not suffer myself to be much excited to hope or fear, by any such prophecies as pass the bounds of my calling, and so be kept from putting my hand to any perilous work.”

“Nor yet would I deny, that it frequently happens, that pious men, living specially near to God, and admitted to more intimacy with the mind of God, gain someway from that intimacy, some knowledge of future and secret things, such as may tend to increase their piety, console their hearts, confirm their faith and hope, and promote their wisdom and prudence.



The history of every age is full of examples. Nor do I see any reason, why truthful and pious men should not be believed, when they declare such things of themselves for the glory of God. And yet we are not rashly to receive without discrimination all such things. For it may easily happen, that men may be deluded by phantasms or affections of the brain, or that such narratives may be fictitious. . . . . But if any revelations are experienced by any, they are more for the private information of those persons, than for a divine rule of faith and practice for others. They may be able to discern, from that internal light which they have from the Spirit, that these things are appointed to them of God. But they have no means of conveying to other minds a sufficient warrant to believe and act upon them. . . . . Of some things, you cannot form a true idea, till you get it by experience. And I confess, I never had prophetic experience. In addition to dilligence in searching the sacred scriptures, than which nothing is more sweet and pleasant, it is enough, if I have the unction from from the holy Spirit, which teaches all things: and it is had in some portion through the kindness of God, by all who fear him."

That the reader may judge of the soundness of this view, we give some examples of such remarkable experience, and those quoted by Witsius.

Among the first instruments of the reformation in Scotland was George Wishart, distinguished both for

learning and piety, and for his spending his days in teaching, and a large part of his nights in prayer. He had been circumvented by the wicked plots of Cardinal Benton, and brought to the stake. From out of the flames, he answered one who exhorted him to constancy,—“The flames indeed embrace my body but cannot conquer my soul. But [turning his eye to the Cardinal, who from a window near by, was looking down on the spectacle,] that same man, who now looks down upon us with disdain, shall in a few days appear at that window again, and with as much of ignominy, as he now has of wanton cruelty.” And so indeed it was. For he was soon after assassinated by a conspiracy, and suspended as a spectacle for public loathing, at that same window. Another case was that of Patrick Simpson, equally distinguished for learning and piety. His wife was suddenly smitten with an alarming disease, and with horrible temptations. He went out alone into his garden, and for several hours gave himself to earnest prayer. And while there, he had discoveries almost surpassing belief. He affirmed, that he had been addressed by an audible voice from heaven, and told what the event would be,—all of which was in minute circumstances fulfilled. Still another instance was that of Hugh Kennedy, a private christian of rare excellence of character. Late one night, he knocked at the door of a friend, and called him from his bed, to join with him in prayer. For said he, my son, who with some friends is abroad on a journey, is

at this moment, in extreme peril. After spending some time in prayer, he rose with a countenance flushed with joy. and said, Now they are safe. And afterwards it was found, that at that very time, those friends experienced a marvellous escape from danger.

These are specimens of the mental phenomena, which such an author deemed worthy of credit, as matters of fact. And the greatest hindrance to our belief of such narratives is, that the popular mind in that age, and in the ages next succeeding, gave proof of being over credulous and quite too indulgent to such wonders. If Mather's *Magnalia* may be taken as a sample of the facility with which marvels had been entertained by historians, from his time back to the reformation, we should naturally read them, with some grains of allowance. Yet I know not, that we are to reject every thing of the kind. If we hold, that none at this day, are commissioned to reveal the will of God as a rule of duty for others, we hold all that is needful to guard the authority of the scripture. And if holding this, any choose to say, that God does, sometimes in ways above natural causes, and besides the ordinary operations of the sanctifying Spirit, communicate particular facts to individual minds, for individual use, we have no controversy with them.

But of another class of phenomena, less doubt has been felt. We allude to remarkable dreams. But here also the way to belief is choked with the lumber

and trash of fictitious marvels. Yet instances of this class have gained general credit. Take for instance the famous dream of Zuingle, credited by the best historians and recorded by himself in his work on the eucharist. He says:—

“When the subject of wholly abolishing the Mass, was debated at Zurich, the controversy was carried on between me and the Secretary. He defended the Romish idea, that the words,—This is my body, import, that the bread is the real body of Christ. And I adduced many instances from scripture, where the word is, is put for signifies. He replied, that these were all in parables; and hence were not in point, because not simple tropes, like what we make of the word in this passage. I replied, that in this,—The seed is the word,—it occurs not in a parable, but in the explanation of a parable, and it is a simple trope. This answer was satisfactory, and procured the abolition of the Mass. Yet I could not repress my endeavor, to find an instance not connected with a parable. So I began to think of all and to revolve them in my mind. But for three days I studied in vain. And I speak the truth, and that which is so true, that though to escape the sneers of men, I gladly would conceal it, yet I feel constrained to declare it, for the honor of God. On the 13 of April, while asleep and in a dream, I seemed to be contending and with all my might, with the Secretary, and to have come to a stand, and my tongue refused utterance.

And as is common in dreams, my perplexity greatly agitated me. When suddely a prompter appeared, whether black or white I cannot tell, for it was a dream; and he said to me,—You fool why do you not quote Ex. XII. This Lamb is the Lord's Passover? At this instant I awoke, and siezed my Septuagint, read and considered the passage, and went and expounded it before the assembly."

The dream of Gaspard Peucer, the son in law of Melancton, was equally remarkable. He was an eminent physician, and professor of medicine in the university at Wittemberg. Having incurred the displeasure of Ann the wife of the Elector of Saxony, he was imprisoned ten years. Deprived of the use of ink and paper, he contrived to carry on his studies, by soaking burnt crusts of bread in wine, for ink, and using the margins of books, for paper, on which to preserve his thoughts. At length he dreamed of being at a funeral of a princess, and of holding the rope, by which the bell was tolled; which broke and he threw it down shouting, The snare is broken, and we are escaped. At the same time those words of Isaiah,—I will add unto thy days fifteen years,—were in a remarkable manner impressed upon his mind. And in a few days after this the princess Ann died, and he was set at liberty, and lived in usefulness and honor, from that time sixteen years.

Grotius gives on the authority of Salmasius, a fact of this kind. A man was warned by a dream to leave

the house, in which he lodged, and under which his enemy had placed a mine of gun-powder. He dreamed that he heard a voice addressing him in a language to him unknown. But the sounds were so clear and strongly impressed, that when he awoke he wrote them down in French letters, and took them to Salmasius to learn of him what they were. And found them, these startling words in the Greek language : *Απιθι, ουκ εσθγαλνῃ τὴν σὴν αψυχλαν* ; that is,—Depart, do you not smell your death? Having learned what the strange words imported, he left the house in which he had the dream, and that same night, it was blown to fragments.

If narratives of this nature may be credited, we should refer them to a particular providence, guiding the sleeping as well as the waking thoughts of men ; but we have no need, to suppose a miracle. Whether we believe, or we discredit such narratives, it is all the same, provided we stand fast by the principle, that God's word needs no mending, and will allow of none. God ceased from his work of revelation, when he had done it, and now he commissions no man to go to other men, and claim to give a new revelation, as a rule of faith and duty. Those who have the written word, with those illuminations of the Spirit, which attend the work of sanctification, have all the means of divine knowledge needful, for the man of God to be thoroughly furnished. No man now can pretend to teach by inspiration, without implying that God's

book needs his appendices and revising touches, to make it what it should be. And thus he dishonors the bible and cuts the sinews of its authority. The old testament before the new, stood on different ground. The perfection of its design lay in a preparation, for the opening of a more full and luminous discovery of the way of salvation. But the new testament claims to be a finished work. It says if any bring another gospel, Let him be accursed. It calls these the last times, and the commission of the ministry of the new testament runs to the end of the world, and their word is declared to be an everlasting gospel. The epistle to the Hebrews, having shown, that the typical dispensation had been displaced by Christ, quotes from the prophet to prove, that no other dispensation or revelation was to come after this. He infers from the fact, that there was to be a shaking of the earth but "o n c e m o r e," that the present dispensation is a "kingdom that cannot be moved." The kingdom of Christ with an everlasting, unchanging gospel for his sceptre, and the holy Ghost for his Vicegerent, is a kingdom that cannot be moved nor altered, in a single principle of its administration.

Now the age of the reformation and those immediately following suffered so much from false prophets, by reason of a want of a clear discernment of this principle. And were it now better understood, we should not hear as much of transcendental prating, about other prophets and other Christs yet to come.



## CHAPTER IV.

We have already narrated some events of a later date, than the commencement of the series, which we are now about to describe. The history of Muncer's faction begins as early as 1521. The enthusiasts began their movement in connexion with religious considerations. But seeking the means of most deeply moving the masses of mind, they naturally discovered, that their advantage lay, in declaiming against the sins of rulers and the oppressions of the people, and in identifying their cause with that of emancipation of the slaves. And they laid the ground-work of their religious theories so as to support revolutionizing principles of government. They began by siezing upon a detached passage, in one of Luther's books, to this effect,—The Christian is the Lord of all and the subject of none. This, though explained by an opposite aphorism,—The Christian is the servant of all, and subject to all,—was severed from its connexion, and forced to represent, that Luther encouraged the resisting of the governments. Thus they scattered the

seeds of sedition privately at first, in the huts of the peasants, under pretence of Luther's authority. In this secret way, they talked largely of bringing down the power of the princes, of being enriched with plunder, and securing liberty and equality for all. And all this was but the realizing of their notion of the reign of Christ. They complained not of the tyranny of the Pope only, but also of abuses allowed by the reformers. With industry and energy they assailed the magistracy and the ministry, the two main pillars of public order. They discoursed abundantly of rearing a new and more perfect church; and to promote this scheme, they introduced their opposition to infant baptism. And to cloak their mischief under the appearance of great sanctity, they talked continually of mortifying the flesh, and keeping alive the spirit, doing works of benevolence, bearing the cross, wearing plain dress, and using simple food. And never did Satan transforming himself into an angel of light, more effectually operate under false pretences. This snare, though slightly concealed, involved innumerable well meaning people, to their ultimate ruin.

Muncer and his associates, having by more private operations prepared the minds of his victims, came out more boldly. He made his first public appearance at Zwickau, where Stork had prepared the way. He was a man of ardent temperament, weak judgement little knowledge of his own heart, wanting in humility, fired with zeal and ambition, of being an au-

thor of great reforms, and yet forgetting, that all true reforms begin in the hearts of the reformers. When he saw, that Luther had acquired a desirable fame, by giving liberty to the church, he courted a like popularity, by giving out himself, as sent of God to restore the natural liberty of man, by abolishing slavery and subjection to rulers. Why is it, said he, that when the gospel invites all to liberty, and inculcates nothing but gentleness, governments rule by force? And this was the strain of his preaching, when he was collecting his forces for the works of violence, which he afterwards performed.

Luther met him at Wittenberg in the beginning of his career, and earnestly admonished him, of what responsibility he was taking, in thus perilling the public peace, and impugning the ordinances of God. From that time he began to thunder forth his invectives against Luther, and to say that he sinned equally with the Pope; that he had brought the reformation so far, and there left it infected with much leaven. Yea that Luther was worse than the Pope, in that he had promulgated a carnal gospel. Muncer now freely declaimed against the tyranny of the rulers, and divulged the levelling principles. He held that all goods were by common right free to all, and that the holding of private property was injustice; that the yoke of civil government, as well as that of papacy was to be thrown off. And that since rulers would not yield to the demands of the people, and sur-

render their power, but still persisted in subjecting the goods and persons of the people to their lusts, it was the duty of all to appeal to arms, and execute the will of God. Roused by this war-trumpet, and seduced by the sweets of the promised liberty, and the hope of plunder, bands of slaves in many districts involved themselves in seditious schemes. The mass of these assembled in Alsace and Suabia.

Muncer, after quitting Wittenberg, went and established himself as pastor of the church in Alstadt. But it was only for a few months, to prepare the way for the insurrection, which he was plotting. Having inoculated a part of his flock with his own principles, he began by abolishing chanting in the church. Then having gradually matured the minds of his people in his views, he set out at their head and demolished a chapel in the vicinity. He was then obliged to flee, and he wandered from place to place, dropping into every ear that he could catch, his revolutionary projects. And so ripe were the peasants for rebellion, that they needed but a word, to enlist them with the rebel forces.

Now a cloud rested upon the reformation, such as might appal the heart of a Luther. There was great plausibility, though great falsehood in the plea of the Papists, that these rebellions were the fruits, of the doctrines and influence of Luther. With a malicious leer, even Erasmus threw out the taunt,—“We are now gathering the fruits of Luther’s doctrine.” The

truth was, that the moving themes of the gospel, now brought suddenly and powerfully to bear upon men's minds, had stirred their earnest thoughts, and awoke boundless aspirations. And many who cared nothing for the gospel, were quite willing to use the occasion, to demand relief from oppressions. They were willing to cast off the yoke of Rome, but not as willing, to put on the yoke of Christ. So little direct agency had the gospel in producing these disorders, that the very beginnings of the tempest arose in districts, where the reformation was least known. And after the tempest had past, it was found, that the parts of the land, where the gospel had done the most, had been scathed the least. Seckendorf, (Book 2 Section 2,) says: "It is certain, that the greatest part of those who began the disturbance, in Suabia and Franconia, were subjects of Popish prelates, in districts where Luther's doctrine had not been preached, and where bishops holding temporal power had excluded it." And although the conspirators in Suabia placed it first in the list of their published grievances, that the preaching of the gospel was not allowed them, Luther told them,—“What ye boast of the gospel is not true; you propose nothing that shows your desire for the teaching of the gospel; every thing pertains to the body, and to property.” But the fact that they regarded Luther as worse than the Pope, and his work as the greatest obstacle their success, is proof, that there was no affinity between the two. The terms of violence

in which they always, after their rupture with Luther, spoke of him and his cause, ought forever to put to silence all imputations of the sins of these men to the reformers.

Yet the Papists of course would have it, that all these rebellions were the harvest of Luther's seed. The rulers hated the reformation, as the alleged occasion of relaxing the loyalty of the people, and the gospel, they dreaded, as the presiding spirit of sedition. And a color of plausibility was given to this idea, by the fact, that the sedition-leaders had been among the reformers, and some of them familiar with them, and by the fact that in the beginning of their work, they abundantly quoted Luther as favoring them, and that they imitated the reformers in claiming the gospel as their religion, in opposition to ancient abuses, and also in claiming liberty of conscience. In this posture of affairs, it is not strange, that the reformers took great pains to disabuse the public mind, and to show, as they did most clearly, that the reformed religion, so far from being an instrument of sedition, was the only true conservative power, and the only means of safety for those terror-smitten nations. This work was done vigorously in published writings, by Luther, Melancthon, Zuingle, Bullinger, Menius Regius and others. Thus did these men of God, who in their work of re-measuring God's temple, had shown themselves to be such competent workmen, wipe off the foul reproach, cast equally upon themselves and upon

the gospel. They severely condemned the seditions, admonished rebels of their duty to their rulers, from the word of God, bore especially hard on the leaders, who had seduced the people to ruin, and they labored by all means, to hush the rage of men madly plunging themselves and their country into the abyss of civil wars.

But the sedition-leaders were more enraged than softened by these publications. Muncer and his associates now proclaimed, that Luther and his friends apprehended nothing but what was carnal; and that they had cut off a few twigs of antichristianity, but had left the stock and roots, for others to destroy. But as they found no warrant for it in the word of God, they invented new words of God; that is, they boasted of extacies and new inspirations, and said, that as man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, we must draw not from the bible only but from the spirit of prophecy within us, making good what Paul has said, i Cor. 14:31, For ye may all prophesy. Now all had commission from Muncer and company, to exercise the prophet's functions, and there came forth a rabblement of prophets, boasting of the Spirit, pretending to revelations, and imitating the rhapsodies of Muncer and Stork. Men of the lowest occupations, endowments and character came out as preachers. And whatever splendid delirium had been vouchsafed to any, by the spirit that rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, was put forth in public har-



angues, repeated in the house and by the way,—no matter how contrary, it might be, to scripture. And it was no wonder, that the flame spread, like that of a burning prairie. Preachers multiplied as the flame advanced. With surprizing art and industry, they diffused their poison every where, gliding into all families, collecting secret meetings where they were not allowed to meet in public, professing to be the special friends of the poor, and of the slaves, and magnifying the sins of the rich, and leaving no art untried, to seduce the credulous and the ignorant.

The claim of immediate inspiration, as the privilege of all who would receive it, opened wide the sluices of error. Whatever was startling and strange, was ready, to meet the demand of ears itching for wonders. And so many restless minds were now in action, with the intent to produce an entire revolution, and reconstruction of all things in church and state, throughout the christian world. Yea their glowing vision embraced nothing short of a complete *Palingenesis*. The bonds of allegiance were sundered by the proclamation, that oaths of allegiance and indeed all oaths are unlawful,—yea we might have added,—that all law human and divine was unlawful. For their new principles ultimately amounted to as much. In carrying out their new doctrines, they of course summoned all slaves to rise and take their liberty. Masses of people were assembled, and armed for resisting the governments, the flames of ci-

vil war spread far and wide, till the most flourishing provinces were swept with torrents of blood.

The insurrection began in the districts of the Black Forest, near the sources of the Danube, on the 19 of July, 1524. The Thurgovian peasantry rose against the Abbot of Richenau, who had refused to allow them to have the preacher of their choice. Shortly after, several thousands of them collected near the small town of Tenger, to liberate an imprisoned minister. Thence the insurrection spread with astonishing rapidity, from Suabia as far as the Rhenish provinces, Franconia, Thuringia and Saxony. In January of the next year, 1525, most of these provinces were in a state of open insurrection.

Towards the close of month, the peasantry put out a declaration of their grievances, or causes of complaint, in twelve articles. Each of these articles was backed by a passage of scripture, and the whole was concluded with these words,—“If we are wrong, let Luther set us right by scriptures.” As these articles with Luther’s answer give us a view of the ostensible, and some of the real grounds of this conflict, we here insert the substance of them as we have translated them from Sleidan’s annals of those times. Those men claimed,—

I. That each church might have liberty to chose its own teacher, and that teacher have liberty to teach the pure word of God, without a mixture of the commandments of men.

II. That no tithes should be collected, except of corn, and these be distributed partly to the poor partly to the ministry, and partly to public uses.

III. That all slaves be emancipated, since by the redemption of Christ, all had been made free.

IV. That the restrictions upon hunting and fishing in the forests and streams, be removed.

V. That the forests, excepting what was already private property, be laid open to the free use of all.

VI. That princes cause the people to be relieved, of their burdens, which have been long accumulating, and that in doing it, they follow the benevolent rule of the gospel.

VII. That the burdens imposed on the farms be not allowed to exceed the original agreement.

VIII. That the existing rents be so reduced, that the cultivators of the soil may have some reward of their labor, and not be reduced to want.

And that there be a more equal division of estates.

IX. That money should not be wrung from them by laws made for the private advantage of a few

X. That penalties be fixed according to established rules, and not from caprice or resentment.

XI. That none be allowed to apply public lands to private use.

XII. That the rule for taxing a family, on the decease of its head, might be abolished, as a great injustice.

These are the twelve demands on which the peas-

ants relied, for making a powerful public impression. And truly the abuses of power were so cruel, that a faithful picture of them would have made a powerful document. And yet these articles are far from an honest statement of the real causes of the rebellion. It was cunning in the rebels to confine their published demands to the limits of seeming justice. Yet this instrument was intended to be the lever for subverting all public justice. But as a document framed to inflame a spirit of rebellion, it was skillfully adapted to its end. It carried on its face a fair seeming of right, concealing the sinister views of its authors. It grouped together the main abuses, under which the people were groaning, it appealed to passions, the most combustible and explosive. And as it went abroad from village to village, and from province to province, it everywhere awoke the murmur, which precedes the earthquake.

Now while so many whole provinces were in actual insurrection, this document heralding aloud the war-cry, was borne on every wind. The arm of princes was palsied, and mens' hearts were failing them for fear. At this critical point Luther interposed, not indeed with the sword, but with a weapon which in another war, he had proved and found to be mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, and that was, his pen, dipped in the fountain of eternal truth. And though the task of reasoning with armies of mad-men, thirsting for blood, might seem hopeless,

as to talk with a whirlwind. Yet the heart of the reformer unappalled, and despairing of no good cause, spoke out. In rehearsing his words, we rehearse historical facts, not endorsing every sentiment which he uttered. His words were:—

“I confess, that those princes, who forbid the preaching of the gospel, and in many ways burden the people, deserve dethronement from the hand of God. For they have no excuse. But you must take care, to maintain a stainless conscience for yourselves, or you will incur a loss both of soul and body. The question for you is not, What is your strength compared with that of your opponents; but how powerful and just is your cause? Credit not the words of all. For Satan in these times, under pretence of preaching the gospel, employs many seditious and blood-thirsty teachers. As in duty bound, I conjure you to listen to my admonition for your good. If the most of you should curse me and load me with reproaches. I shall be unmoved, and satisfied that I have saved some, from divine vengeance. As to the rest, as they despise me, so in turn I will not fear them; but I come to the subject before me.”

“You indeed use a divine and christian name, calling yourselves the people of God, and proclaiming, that you wish the law of God to be obeyed, by all. But take not the name of God in vain, for his threatened punishment awaits you, if you falsify in this matter. The God who drowned the world with a flood,

and consumed the whole city of Sodom with a shower of fire, can blot you out, whatever may be your forces. But that you do falsely use the name of God, as the patron of this enterprise, it were easy to show. Nor has he deceived us who has said,—He that taketh the sword shall perish with the sword. That is, they who in their own rashness take to themselves the power of avenging their own wrongs. What will you reply to this, ye who pretend to wish yourselves and all others to obey the law of God? Will ye yet take the sword, and resist the magistrate, whom God has ordained and commanded you to obey? Is not this rashly to use the name of God?"

"But you say, 'The oppressions of the government are intolerable. They take away the gospel from us, and oppress us in every thing, and we can bear it no longer.' Be it so. That will not justify mobs and sedition. For whose duty is it to restrain crime? Is it not his to whom the tribute is given, and the right and power of the sword?—as the scriptures plainly show. But both the law of God, and the light of nature teach, that it is wrong for any one to assume to be the judge in his own cause. For our selfishness makes us blind, in our own cause. Your mob and sedition are undeniably engaged, in the cause of private revenge. For you assume to be judges in your own cause, and to avenge your supposed wrongs, by your own authority. But this is at war with the law of God, the law of nature, and simple equity. And this course ad-

mits of no defence. If God has commanded you to do this, by special revelation, you must prove it by a miracle."

"But here it is according to the words of Christ. Ye clearly see the faults of others, but overlook your own greater wickedness. The government does wrong, and you do worse, in that ye despise the command of God, and invade another's rights and leave nothing to be done by lawful authority. For what remains, when you have taken away the power of the magistrate? I appeal to yourselves. Which is the worse, he who takes the greatest part of one's, goods yet leaving him some, or he who take all, both goods and life? The government takes your property; it does wrong. But you take away the power of governing, in which consists its essence, its property and its life. You are therefore less innocent than they."

"But you say, that you will not take property and life. Believe this who will, not I. He who takes the main part will not scruple to take the rest. Weigh I beseech you, weigh well the matter; if your principle prevails there will soon be no law, no magistracy, and each will be left to do what he wills, and nought but mutual slaughter will ensue. For each will assume the righting of his own wrongs, guided by his own passions. But if this would be unjust and intolerable in a single person, much more in a multitude. What if in your own company, license should be given for each one to take private revenge, in his own cause?



What would you do? You would be compelled, in self-defence, to establish a public tribunal. What excuse have you then for putting down the tribunals, which God has set up? This very principle of justice of which we speak, is written in the hearts of all; and is recognized by the most savage tribes: and without it all the foundations of society would be dissolved."

"And if you carefully observe, you will see, that in this respect you are no better than the Turks, and other nations, strangers to religion. For upholding law and obeying magistrates would not make you christians. For necessity compells even the unwilling to do it. But when you trample down the natural law, written in the hearts of all, you are worse than heathen, unfit to be called christians, and by calling yourselves so, you abuse the name of God and christianity. Nay you are not fit to be called Turks, for you break a law which the Turks obey. How then can you stand in the sight of Christ who is to judge you? Beware again and again, to what kind of teachers you listen. For I fear that blood-thirsty men have crept in among you, who have seduced you by this false teaching, expecting to lift themselves into power by the peril of your fortunes and lives. God commands us to leave all vengeance for him to execute, and to obey magistrates, even the wicked. And if you do not obey, you will raise a tempest, which will at last return upon your own head. God will not let this lawless conduct go unpunished. While ye seek

by such means, liberty of life and goods, it is at the peril of your own souls. The anger of God burns against you, and the devil has sent false teachers among you. Follow then my advice, and beware of them."

"A word next respecting christian, or gospel-right, a name in which you boast so much. Christ commands us not to resist evil, but to offer the other cheek to a smiter, to give the coat to him that would take the cloak, and pray for enemies and the like. Now see how your course agrees with this command. See whither your teachers have led you. Is it not the duty of christians to suffer, to bear the cross to refrain from revenge, and from smiting with the sword? But what of this do we see in you? It is no small matter, to answer the demands of the christian name. Take an example of gospel-law, or right. Peter, to defend his Lord, smote a servant of the high Priest. And had he not just cause? Since they not only sought the life of Christ, but also sought to take away by force, the teaching of the the gospel, by taking its teacher away, a greater injury than has come on you. But what did Christ? He commanded Peter to desist, uttering a severe sentence against those, who smite with the sword; that is, that those who, in contempt of the magistrate, exercise private revenge. What did Christ himself, when raised upon the cross, and forbidden to teach? He bore it patiently and committed all to God, and prayed for his murderers. And

we must do the like, or lay off the christian name. Do as Christ did, and God's power will show itself, as it did after Christ's death, in propogating the gospel far and wide, in spite of all his enemies."

"But since you have taken up arms, you will not obtain what you wish, and your arms will fall from your hands. Allow me to refer to my own case. The whole world opposed me with all its might. And the greater its violence, the greater was the progress of my doctrine. But I did nothing by violence, I raised no riots, sought no revenge, but reverently obeyed the magistrates. I labored my writings, committed the cause to God, and rested in his power. And so I have been preserved till this day. The Pope and all my enemies have gnashed their teeth against me. yet my doctrine has spread through many nations. But you madly rush forward, and so hinder your cause, vastly more than you promote it. And you should abandon the christian name, when driving a scheme so unchristian."

"Yet I am far from excusing the magistrates, who indeed have done much wrong. But their wrong does not make yours a christian work. Yet if you obstinately continue to shelter your cause under the christian name, I profess myself your adversary, because under the pretext of the gospel, you are doing what is contrary to the gospel. I pray that God in his grace would turn you from your purpose. For I clearly see the hand of the devil in this work. Since he has not

succeeded to crush me with the aid of the Pope, he hopes to do it by these blood-thirsty preachers. I will therefore put forth earnest prayers, as I said, though I had rather you would not make it needful for me to pray against you. For though I am a sinner God will hear my prayer, since its cause is just. For God, who will hallow his own name, commands us to pray, that his name may be hallowed. I therefore exhort you, and pray, that you would not despise the prayers of me or others. For if they can avail any thing, you may be sure, they will be against you. But ye have no such grounds of confidence in your prayers. For ye know from the scripture and your own conscience, that this work of yours is impious. Who of you can have a face to pray to God in such a cause? You have placed your salvation in arms and armies. Since ye have exercised neither prayers nor patience, putting all your dependence in yourselves, you show, that ye expect no aid from God. He may wink at your sin for a time, and allow you to have some success, but it will turn to your destruction."

"You may now see, that it is easy to answer your twelve articles of demand and grievance,—which allowing them to be well founded, are yet inconsistent with your own conduct. Because you are now endeavoring to extort them by violence. And this endeavor itself is repugnant to common justice. The author of those articles, whoever he is, is a wicked man. For he has dishonestly quoted and perverted

those texts, by which he has inflamed your passions, and exposed you to danger. Examine them and ye will see, that they make nothing for you. He pretends, that the gospel is wrested from you. But the gospel is not a thing that can be wrested from any one. For it is not confined to place, but it travels over the earth, as freely as the star, that piloted the wise men from the east to the birth-place of the Saviour. The government can indeed exclude us from a place, where the gospel is taught; but we can go and find the teaching in other places. Christ has bidden us, when persecuted or not allowed to have the gospel, in one place, to flee to another. Your first demand, relating to the appointment of ministers, is right in itself, if properly enforced. The government, who support the minister, should first be asked to appoint a pastor. And if they refuse, the people may choose and support one themselves. But if the government will not allow that, let both minister and people quit the jurisdiction of that government."

"Your demand about tithes is most unjust. Be liberal with your own, and not with another's. Ye act as if ye were the proprietors of all things in your possession, and thus ye betray what is your ultimate purpose. You would also abolish all slavery. Did not Abram and most other holy men of old hold slaves? Read Paul, and he will teach the true doctrine touching that thing. This demand also looks to violence, and rapine, and is at war with the gospel. For a

bond-man can be a pious man, and enjoy christian liberty, as really as a sick man, or one who is held as a captive. But your design is to bring all to a condition of exact equality,—which is absurd and foolish. For there cannot be a commonwealth without a difference of persons and conditions. Some must be children, some servants, and some masters : some must command and some obey.”

“As to wild game, pastures, forests, rivers, taxes and the like, I leave them to be discussed by lawyers. For my sacred calling has not required me to be skilled in such things. This brethren is my advice, which you have asked of me ; weigh it seriously by the testimony of scripture. Seek not to turn aside its force, by denouncing me as a flatterer of the rulers, and a perverter of the truth. But first consider what I have said ; it is a matter of vast concern to you. Beware of those teachers, who would spur you on ; I know the whole race of them. They are leading you to a precipice, that they may get fame and wealth by your dangers. Hence I cannot endure their making so free a use of the name of christian. In all their letters, soliciting others to join them, they boast, that they have taken up arms by a special divine warrant, and for love of country, and the free preaching of the gospel, and the spread of truth, justice and honesty. Yet in all, they have been providing only for themselves, and drawing around them a force, to protect them in perilous schemes of plunder. Having set forth such

false pretences, they summon the whole neighborhood take up arms with them, and threaten them with vengeance in case of refusal."

This is a specimen of Luther's dealing with the deluded peasants when the fires of the insurrection were actually flaming abroad, from province to province, and when the blow was about to be struck, which was to open upon the land torrents of blood. The same voice, which had shook the papal throne and palsied the very heart of spiritual despotism, was equally urgent in remonstrance against lawless violence. It was here found, that true reforms harmonize with a wisely conservative spirit. And that all valuable institutions have their best friends in those who seek to promote reforms on christian principles. If any think that Luther carried the matter of submission to tyranny, and of defence of slavery, too far, their candor will impute it to the fault of the age, and his not having wholly corrected his hereditary and educational errors. Yet with this allowance, the document is as truthful, as it is conservative. And hard must have been the heart, that after the reading of it, could rush into scenes of violence and blood. How much of our civil and social blessings do we owe the gospel and its ministry! How endless are the proofs, that godliness is profitable for the life that now is!

And having dealt faithfully with the rebel peasants Luther in equal faithfulness turned to the rulers, as follows:—



"It is to you, rulers, and especially rulers in the church, that all the present tumults are to be ascribed. For ye have not ceased to persecute the teaching of the gospel, and that when ye knew better. Ye magistrates also, cease not to wring money from the poor, to pamper you in luxury, till the poor can no longer bear their load. A great danger is impending, a sword hangs over you by a brittle thread, and yet ye seem as secure, as if none could disturb you. But this security, I fear, will prove your ruin. Sometimes God pours contempt on princes. And I have often warned you to beware of this. But ye are willingly rushing upon your own destruction, and no warning can move you. The wrath of God will therefore be poured upon you if ye do not amend. The signs are dark, betokening the heats of God's anger, because ye tolerate only false teachers, to involve us in error and darkness. This is the spring of that popular sedition, which will upturn Germany from its foundations, if God do not hear our prayers, and bring the remedy. Men neither can nor ought longer to bear your oppressions. Ye must have a radical change, and yield to the word of God, for there is no resisting the storm. If these armies are put down, others will be gathered, which if ye destroy, God will raise up others still, to punish your wickedness."

"Some of you have boasted, that ye will spend all your wealth, in exterminating Luther's doctrines; and now where is that wealth? So the Jews would have

no king, when Christ their King came among them. And soon they had no king, with a witness. And yet after all you have suffered in opposing the gospel, some of you continue to add new contempts of God's word, and attribute all the troubles of the country to my doctrine. But go on with your railing, and in your refusal to know, what my doctrine is, and what the gospel is, and show your obstinacy and malice. I have in all my teaching revered and upheld the government, and abhorred sedition, and earnestly exhorted the people to obey magistrates, and even to endure tyranny, and your impious domination. Ye are witnesses of this. This sedition therefore has not come from me, but from those blood-thirsty men who are as much my enemies as yours. They have imposed upon the ignorant people, and brought in this pest. For more than three years, they have been driving this game. And from all other sources, they have not met with as much resistance, as from me alone. And if your continued wickedness shall provoke God, to let satan loose and raise a popular fury against you, I shall have no power to stay the tempest. Yet the fault will not be mine, nor the fault of the gospel. Since this very gospel has not only endured your persecutions at every step, but has caused prayers to be poured forth for you, and has defended your rights before the people. If I desired to revenge the injuries, which you have done me, I should have need to stand still only and laugh in my sleeve, and be a mere

spectator of the tragedy, or join the maddened multitude, throw oil upon the flames and be a nail in your wound."

"I therefore earnestly pray you, not to despise my admonition, nor regard the sedition as a trifle. Not that I fear that they will crush you, but that you have reason to fear the wrath of God. For if he should take vengeance according to your deserts, as I fear he will, you cannot escape, be your enemies ever so few. If therefore you will at all regard my counsels, provide against the approaching storm. Beware lest a flame be kindled to involve all Germany. Our sins, that tempt the wrath of God, are manifest, and we have reason to tremble at the shaking of a leaf; much more, when such vast multitudes are in arms meditating violence. Lenity and clemency will bring no loss, and may secure much advantage. But by violence, you may peril the very existence of the nation. And since there are other ways, better to do the work, why will ye incur the dangers?"

"They have stated their grievances, to the number of twelve, which are to such an extent agreeable to reason and equity, that ye ought to be ashamed. Yet they are not to be justified, for turning these real causes of complaint, to a bad purpose. And yet there are other and greater causes of complaint, which they might have alleged, regarding the commonwealth of Germany. These I have dilligently set forth in a treatise addressed to you, and having rejected them, you

now have a severe handling for it. They ask first, that ministers may be properly appointed to teach the word of God. And this request cannot be justly denied them. For rulers have no right to withhold the gospel. And many other of their complaints, as that touching slavery and the like are well founded. For it does not belong to magistrates to afflict the people, but to defend their fortunes and lives. Yet no bounds exist to your oppressions. If the peasants in one year, have a plentiful harvest, the government and the landlords tax them more, absorb the whole, and waste it in their extravagance. And what hope is there for the poor men, and what chance to improve their condition?"

Thus did the Reformer handle the oppressors of the poor. At the close of his tract, he addressed to both parties a dissuasive from the use of arms, exhorting to a settlement by negotiation. He held forth to the rulers a glowing picture of the execrable end of tyrants. He especially grieved, that both parties were going into the war, with a guilty conscience,—the rulers contending to maintain their tyrranny, and the people, to throw all into confusion. And he declared, that those who fall in such wars, must loose their souls. He then deplored the state of Germany, about to be destroyed by civil wars, and said, that it was easier to take up arms, than it is to lay them down. He besought all to desist and not to bequeath to posterity, a distracted and bleeding country. He advised, that

the matter should be decided by arbitration of referees mutually chosen, and that the magistrates remit something of their extreme rights, and the people listen to reason and recede from some of their demands. And he warned them, that unless they regarded his counsels, he should see the ruin of both parties. For the people were at war with the princes, as their oppressors in matters of fortune and of salvation. And the princes were at war with the people, as so many robbers and blasphemers. And he prayed, that in the midst of such obstinate ferocity, God would open a way of peace, and defeat the designs of both.

While he was employing these means of peace, the peasants were driving on the war, alike against papist and protestant rulers. And when he had farther seen the progress of the sedition, and the mad spirit of the rebels, he published another tract, calling on all classes to unite, and scatter the peasant-armies as robbers and assassins; because they had basely violated their faith and allegiance, and siezed by force the property of others, and then cloaked all their wickedness under the christian name. Now he called on the magistrates to use the sword without fear because it pertained to their office: since it was lawful to kill those working sedition. At first, he said, they appealed to the bible, and professed to wish to have their error pointed out. And while they kept in these limits he dared not condemn them. Yet after it had been made clear, that they had dissembled in all this,

he was compelled to change his style. Hence he blew the trumpet, and called for the whole force of Germany, to assemble against them, as against so many wild beasts. Some blamed the severity of this tract, and he wrote another, to justify it, and show, that that was not a time for the exercise of clemency, and that those who could excuse the rebels must be considered as partakers of their crimes.

Though he was by these means doing an important work, few immediate fruits of it were discoverable. The war waxed warmer every day; the bells no longer rang for worship, but their solemn tones were heard calling the people to arms and mutual slaughter.

The peasant-army had collected at Ulm. Thence they proceeded in three divisions; the first took its station in Algovia and another by the lake Constance. Here a truce of three days was made, in hope of settling the difficulty, But it was soon broken; each party imputing the blame to the other. Then the war commenced in earnest. The imperial government, anxious for public safety, sent ambassadors, to require both parties to desist, under penalty of death. They spoke first of a truce, yet in vain, since a truce had been broken, and neither party could trust the other. Yet by the intervention of some of the Swiss cities, the peasant-chiefs came to Ulm, April 2. The imperial ambassadors showed their commission to treat for peace. But the treaty could not proceed without a

truce, which could not be had, and all things tended to violence, and the officers of the government army returned the next day the camp. They then marched their forces to Elching, below Ulm on the Danube, and there killed a large number of the armed peasants, and brought back more, prisoners to the city of Ulm. Then the commander of the Swiss Confederacy, George Truchess, proceeded with his forces to another little town below Ulm, where the peasants had assembled in great numbers, and bringing a disciplined soldiery against a confused rabble, he slew a great part of them, and the rest fled and were drowned in the river. Truchess wished to follow up his victory. But he was compelled to delay his march a few days, and the Swiss cities again offered their mediation for a truce. The confederates would make no terms with those who had violated a truce. They did not refuse to treat with the other divisions in Algovia and vicinity. But these insisted on equal conditions for all; so the attempt at negotiation failed. The matter continued to be a subject of anxious deliberation between the ambassadors of the empire and the cities. But at length in despair of peace, the confederate forces were led forth to battle. But now a part of the peasant-forces had fled, and the rest surrendered without fighting.

In the mean time, the fire broke out in a new spot. In a different part of Switzerland, about the Hala, and through Franconia, other bands of peasants had



collected in great numbers. They took possession of the town of Weinsberg, and put to a cruel death Lewis Count Helfenstein, and seventy men under his command. A body of peasants drew up in close order, with advanced pikes, while others drove Count Helfenstein and other principal men against this forest of weapons. And this they did, rejecting with insults, the pleadings of his wife, the natural daughter of the Emperor, Maximilian. With her infant in her arms, she cast herself down at their feet, and with a flood of tears, besought them to spare her husband, and the father of her child. A lad who had served under the Count, and had afterwards joined the rebels, gambolled in mockery before him, and played the dead march on his fife, as if he were leading his victims in a dance. All were murdered; the infant was wounded in its mother's arms, and the mother thrown upon a dung cart, and carried to Heilbron.

After this the peasants divided their forces, and one division went towards Wirtemberg, and after taking possession of many places, they took their station at Eisling. The ambassadors of the empire, after the failure of their attempts for peace, had gone to Ulm. But Truchess, after subduing the peasants in the regions of Ulm and Algovia, took his station at Lake Constance. And there he dispersed many thousands. Such as he took prisoners, he treated with great severity, especially those concerned in the murder of the Count Helfenstein. The unfortunate youth, who had

played the dead march in sport, was fastened to a post by a loose chain, and fire was made in a circle around him. The General and the nobles brought wood with their own hands, and mocked at the cries of the sufferer.

The other division of the rustic army went into Franconia, and there burnt two hundred castles, houses of the nobles, and convents, and took the town of Wirceburg, and laid siege to the citidel. But Truchess coming from Wirtemberg, cut them off at Engelstadt, and put them to flight. Afterwards he came to Wirceburg, and raised the siege of the castle, and punished many with death.

The peasantry of the Black Forest had enrolled themselves under John Muller of Bulgenback. He with an imposing appearance, wrapped in a red cloak and wearing a red cap, proceeded from village to village, followed by peasant-trains. Behind him went a waggon decorated with boughs and ribbons, and bearing a tricolored flag, black, red and white, the standard of revolt. A herald with similar decorations read aloud the twelve articles, and invited the people to rebel. And whoever refused was banished from the community. In their progress they increased in violence, exclaiming, "We must compel the lords of the soil to submit to our terms." They proceeded to break open the graneries, to empty the cellars and to draw the fish-ponds, and also to destroy the castles and convents. They swore, that they would make

every man who wore a spur, bite the dust. At their approach towns which could not stand a siege, opened their gates, and made common cause with them. If repulsed in one place, the rebels re-assembled in another, and braved the most formidable regular armies.

The flame had spread into Lotharingia, and Anthony, prince of that province, with his brother, Claudius of Guise and others, collecting the fragments of the French army, after the capture of their king, sent a detachment of horse and foot, to the town of Lupfsten, and killed fifteen hundred peasants, and the rest were put to flight. The next day he made a vast slaughter of peasants near Zaberne, and withal a disgraceful breach of faith. For the peasants laid down their arms, on the promise of their lives, and he then marched his troops through the disordered multitude, and killed the greatest part of them. Then the town was taken, and put to indiscriminate slaughter by a furious soldiery. Here was a sad fulfilment of Luther's prediction, that the storm of violence, which the peasants were raising, would return upon their own heads, and that both parties would be deeply involved in guilt.

Now the Prince commenced a homeward march. But an army of peasants took their station at the opening of a valley, to prevent his passing. A battle here ensued, four thousand were slain. Now the army with many prisoners and much spoil, returned,

having caused the destruction of more than eighteen thousand lives. A like destruction of life occurred in other places ; in Petersheim near Worms, a great number of peasants were slain after they had surrendered. Here the Prince Palatine and Richard, Archbishop of Treves commanded ; the latter not only approving the butchery, but even stimulating the soldiers by his example, killing many with his own hands.

In some places the discontents were appeased by the skill of rulers, and mediators. But everywhere the matters of complaint and demand were the same that were first put forth by the Swiss, and then sent through all the states. The flame ran from Thuringia, and the bounds of Saxony, even to the Alps, and through the region of Salsburg. So much for the first peasant-war, in the South and West of Germany. The number slain in this one war in a single year, was by the lowest estimate, fifty thousand.

But the trouble was not confined to the South and West. Muncer having traversed those parts, and lighted the flame for a general conflagration, left his fires to burn, and found like employment for himself in other places. Some of the people of Mulhausen, in Thuringia, chose him for their pastor. The town council resisted ; he made influence enough with the people, to raise a force, depose the council, and put up a new one, with himself at the head, at once pastor and chief magistrate, or dictator of the town. Here was the beginning of confusion. Now the cry went out,

We must exterminate with the sword, as Joshua did the Canaanites. And Muncer sent letters abroad in every direction, inviting the peasants to enlist under him, as a divinely commissioned leader. And he signed his letters,—“Thomas Muncer, armed with the sword of Gedeon.” Very naturally the peasants ceased their labor, and begun to live by plundering the rich, and realizing their visions of all men upon a level.

As Mulhausen was a free town, not subject to any provincial government, Muncer reigned there as king, unmolested for a year. At his instigation, the people ejected the monks, and took possession of their dwellings. The best of these was assigned to Muncer, now the chief dignitary of the place, acting both the priest and ruler. He claimed to give judgement in all cases from the bible, and from immediate revelation. All things were subject to his arbitrary will. Every word of his was received as law, yea as the law of God. He taught that community of goods was specially agreeable to humanity, as all men were equal and free, and had equal right to all property. Of course all labor ceased, and all united in consuming the existing property, probably expecting to live by plunder for the future.

While these things were in progress here, and the war which we have described in Upper Germany was advancing, Muncer formed the plan to strike a decisive blow. Having got possession of the convent of the

Franciscans, he there cast some cannon, and then he sent forth a summons to rouse peasants in the whole neighborhood, to enlist in the cause of universal liberty. To give the war-blasts of his trumpet greater effect, he received the aid of one Pfifer, a man gifted with signal audacity, who laid great stress upon nocturnal dreams and spectres, and who pretended to have taken a special commission from a dream, which he had had of a vast army of mice, which he vanquished and put to flight. Thus he exchanged the profession of a monk for that of a brawler, and recruiting officer for Muncer's army. Muncer with great industry sent abroad his seditious letters inflaming the popular mind, with the conceit of universal equality, and unlimited plunder, and declared himself specially commissioned of God, to punish impious kings. This was the style of his letters,—“When will you shake off your slumbers? Arise and fight the battles of the Lord. The time is come, France, Germany and Italy are in motion. Forward, forward, forward! Heed not the cries of the ungodly. They will weep like children, but ye must have no pity. Let your swords be bathed in blood, work while it is day.”

The peasants were not slow, in obeying the summons. The remembrance of their oppressions, mingled with the hope of plunder, to inflame their passions. And they eagerly flocked around the standard of revolt. Through the districts of Mansfeld, Stolberg, Swartzburg, Hesse and Brunswick, the peasants rose

in a body. And at once they began to plunder the convents, and to spread terror and devastation around them, far and wide. Even at Wittemberg, the doctors who feared not Emperor nor Pope, trembled in the presence of a mad man, and watched his every step with intense anxiety. Melancthon said, "If he succeeds, it is all over with us, unless Christ appear for our deliverance. His progress is marked with a cruelty more than Scythian, his threats are too horrible to be repeated."

Muncer, though he made such flaming speeches, at first was cautious in his movements. He would not peril his fortune before, all the people in the vicinity were in arms. But Pfifer, impatient of delay, sallied out with his forces, and depopulated the country about Isfeld, demolishing castles and churches, and driving off the nobility, or putting them in chains, and returned with much plunder. The sight of the plunder put new life into the peasants; operating like the smell of fresh blood upon so many hungry tigers. Now Muncer struck in, and commenced operations. He left Mulhausen and joined the army of Pfifer.

It was now time for the governments to act or be annihilated. Philip, the young Landgrave of Hesse, afterwards a tower of strength to the protestant cause, was the first to take the field. His Knights and retainers swore to live or die with him. He was joined by Duke George of Saxony, Henry Duke of Brunswick, and John the Elector of Saxony. For Frederic



his brother, the first protector of Luther, was at the pious point of Death, and by a departure to the better country, escaped the pain of seeing the greater part of those tumults, the prospect which clouded his setting sun. Thus both Popish and reformed princes united against the common enemy. When these combined princes came in sight, the peasants in alarm, took their station on a hill, near Frankhausen. They set about fortifying their position, with the little skill which they had, and with such materials, as carriages and the apparatus of their camp. They had cannons but no powder for their use. And the allied army had hemmed them in, and no help appeared.

The princes pitying their condition, sent messengers, to exhort them to surrender and go home in peace. And the mass of them showed signs, that they would have been glad to have done it. This was a critical moment for Muncer, whose sword of Gedeon would have lost its puissance, and whose life was doomed in case of such an arrangement. And he was well aware of his position, and a better master of the tactics of such an occasion, than he was of the military art. He rose with an expression of great sternness, and said:—

“ You see, Fellow Soldiers and Brethren, not far from you, the tyrants who, though thirsting for your blood, are too cowardly to commence the battle, but ask you to surrender on terms foolish and ridiculous. Now you know, that I commenced this enterprize,

not as my own, (for I am not skilled in such things,) but by the command of God. Hence it is my duty and yours, to obey and not desert the station, where God has placed us. God of old commanded Abram, to sacrifice his son. And though he knew not the event, yet he obeyed. So God preserved his son to him and rewarded his faith. And it becomes us, in a like condition, to persevere, and leave the event with God. We shall succeed. God has signally aided us so far. We have subdued every thing in the shape of an enemy. And God in many texts of scripture, has promised his aid to the afflicted. We are afflicted, and that because of our desire, to propogate the knowledge of God. And we should not doubt of victory. And consider the character of our enemies; they are called princes, while in truth they are tyrants, exhausting your substance, to waste in luxury and prodigality. They care not a whit for the interests of the country, judge not the cause of the poor, suffer the ways to be beset with robbers, restrain not thieves, and neglect the cause of orphans and widows. They not only neglect the worship of God themselves, but they hinder it in others. They daily invent new pretexts for extorting money, to consume in luxury and pride. And for trivial causes, they engage in wars, to consume what is left to the poor men. These are the noble arts and noble virtues of our noblemen, and God will not longer endure such things, but is determined to exterminate them as he did the Ca-

naanites of old. And the fact, that they are the protectors of the execrable impiety of the priesthood, will not shield them. For how much wickedness is there in that single corruption of the mass, to say nothing of the rest. As Christ cast out the traders from the temple, so we must now cast out the cursed priests and their patrons."

"Be brave then in the cause of God, and cut off the whole multitude of drones. There is no way of making a safe and honorable peace. For they will neither desist, nor restore liberty, nor allow the worship of God. But it were better for us to die, than to approve of their wickedness, and suffer the teaching of the gospel to be taken from us. I assure you, that God will help us. For he has so assured me. He who cannot lie, has commissioned me to do this work, of chastising our wicked rulers. And it is his way, to illustrate his power, by slaying his enemies by, few and feeble hands; as in the case of Gedeon and his handful of men, and of Jonathan and his servant, and in case of David against the monstrous Giant of Gath. There is no doubt, that this day, yea this very day, will be made memorable by another such event. We are not indeed well armed and fortified, but we shall conquer. Heaven and earth will change, sooner than we shall be left of God. So of old the sea gave way, for Israel to escape his pursuers. Let then no array of opposition or danger disturb you, but go and bravely meet the cursed foe. Fear not his terrible engines

of death. I will receive his shots in my sleeve." At this instant, a rainbow appeared in the heavens, and he adroitly turned it to his account, by connecting it with the rainbow, painted on his standards. "See" said he, "my bow in the clouds, a pledge of help from God, a sign and testimony of his perpetual favor towards us. By this bow, answering to that upon our banner, God gives the sign, that he will help us in battle, and he forewarns our enemies of their destruction."

He ended, and a murmur of dissatisfaction went through the croud, in view of the prospect before them. But those whose faith was not equal to the emergency, had no chance, to express their fears. Nor did this Gedeon, like that of old, give the fearful and cowardly, an opportunity to retire. All things were done in confusion, so that a few worthless fellows drowned the voice of the rest, and carried out the views of Muncer. They followed up the idea of the pretended miracle, and spoke of the greatness of their number, which was about eight thousand. Then a hymn was sung imploring the aid of the holy Spirit. At this moment a young gentleman by the name of Geholfen, came up as an envoy from the princes: and Muncer siezed this chance, to cut off all possibility of his people treating with the princes, and murdered the messenger on purpose to exasperate his enemy, It had the desired effect. The princes at once prepared for action. And Philip, the Landgrave of

Hesse addressed the army and said:—"I well know, that princes are often in fault, for we are but men. But God requires the powers that be to be obeyed. And we are now called upon not only to sustain lawful authority, but to defend our wives and children, from the fury of these assassins. The Lord will give us victory, for he has said, He that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God."

After a brief address, setting forth these views, he gave the signal, and the attack commenced. The peasant-army meanwhile stood still, singing,—“Come Holy Spirit,”—and waiting for help from heaven. But soon the cannon opened a breach in their frail fortifications, and scattered confusion and death among them. Now their courage forsook them, and they fled in complete disorder, hither and thither. And five thousand of them were killed in their flight. Finally the battle centered upon Frankhausen, where three hundred more were captured and put to death. Muncer had fled into town, and hid in a house not far from the gate. One of the noblemen happened to enter this house, and his servant went up into the top of the house, to look out abroad, and he espied a man in a chamber on a bed. “Who are you?” He demanded. “Are you one that has fled hither in the rout, one of the rebels?” He denied that he was, and said that he had been long sick of a fever. But the soldier seeing a knapsack, opened it and found a letter which Albert Mansfeld had written to Muncer,

admonishing him, to desist from sedition. And this unheeded admonition became the instrument of his detection. Though Muncer still denied, the soldier offered violence, and then he confessed, that he was Muncer. He was then taken before the princes, where he plead, in justification, that he was called to chastise the nobles, since they were opposers of the gospel, and had need by such means, to be taught their duty. The Landgrave showed to him from the gospel, the duty of obeying magistrates, and of shunning sedition and private revenge. At this he was silent. When questions were put to him, he cried out in an expression of grief. Duke George said to him, "You are now afflicted indeed : but think of the afflictions, which you have caused to thousands of poor men, who by your means have to day found a grave." Here, he broke forth in a loud laugh, and replied, that they would have it so.

Afterwards he was carried to Helderung, in the jurisdiction of Mansfeld, where he was thoroughly examined, as to what were his ultimate purposes, and who were his confederates. He confessed all ; the princes next took him to Mulhausen, where they had punished with death many of the rebels, and Pfifer among the rest. Thus ended Pfifer's dream, of the vanquished army of mice. Here Muncer was brought into the camp, then in great agony, unmanned, and unable to state his views in prospect of death. Henry Duke of Brunswick sought to comfort him, by suitable

pious suggestions. And just before his death, he so far recovered himself, that he confessed openly his error, while the soldiers were drawn up before him, ready for his execution. He exhorted the princes to a more tender regard for the people, and more kindness to the poor, and thus remove the danger of their coming into snares of this kind. Having done his speech, he was beheaded at a blow, and his head affixed to a spear, was set up in the camp.

Thus ended the career of the most famous of the Celestial Prophets, and one of the most effective scourges of his generation. He had done however an important work, in that he gave the world an example, and some sickening experience of that liberty and equality which ever forms the the ideal paradise of the levelling enthusiast. On this occasion the following words passed between one of the nobles and a peasant youth. "Well my boy, what government is most to your mind, that of the princes or of the peasants?" "Ah my Lord, no edge of the sword inflicts such suffering, as the rule of a peasant over his fellow." What remained of this branch of the rebellion was quenched in blood.



## CHAPTER V.

Christianity invokes the potent influence of the prayer of the church, to sustain the authority of rulers: on the ground, that that authority is a protection, under which godliness, honesty and all christian virtues repose. And the events of the Lutheran reformation, in its conflict with the anabaptist rebellions, give advantageous illustrations of this orderly spirit of true christianity. Luther had from the first, withstood the rebellion, and while it was raging, it was his whole employment to stay its course. He preached, he printed, he spared neither argument, advice entreaty, nor irony. As a specimen of the latter, he by way of derision added a thirteenth to the peasants' twelve articles of grievance and demand, as follows—  
Item, from this day forth, the honorable council shall be powerless, its functions shall be to do nothing, it shall sit as an idol or a log, the common people shall chew its meat for it, and it shall govern, bound hand and foot. From this day, the waggon shall guide the horses, the horses shall hold the reins. and all go on

prosperously, in conformity with the principles of the foregoing articles.

Luther did more than to use his pen. When the storm was at its height, he went forth into the most agitated districts, and preached and labored to soften the hearts of the people, and hush the tempest. And he was strengthened from above in his work and labored with great success. And the reformed teachers everywhere exerted a similar influence. At Halle, Brentz held such a sway over the hearts of the people, that by the force of divine truth, he defended the city by the hands of six hundred citizens, against four thousand of the maddened peasants. At Ichterhausen, where an army of peasants had met to demolish some castles, and murder the owners, Myconius took his life in his hand, went in among them, and by the power of his eloquence, diverted them from their purpose. Thus was the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, in the hands of the reformers, effectually wielded in the nation's defence. And after the work of desolation was over, Luther asserted, that if sound doctrine had not withstood the madness of the people, the revolt would have extended much farther, even to the overthrow of both church and state. Before Muncer began at Mulhausen, Luther sent a letter to the town-council, warning them not to receive him, because he was plotting robbery and violence. He reminded them of his doings at Alstadt, how he sent about his emissaries in disguise, concealing their true

doctrines, and seducing men to sedition, He advised them to ask Muncer, where he had his commission to preach ; and if he should say, he had it from heaven, then ask him, for a miraculous proof of the miraculous commission ; and if he could not give it, expel him as an impostor.

Thus faithfully did the reformers labor, to save the people from sedition. Nor did they labor in vain. Melancthon says of the state of things in Electoral Saxony,—“In our province we have peace. Our princes have used moderate severity, in checking seditions, and so awed the populace, that no violence has been attempted. In most other places, the peasantry took up arms, but here we have been quiet from even a suspicion of a movement. In almost all other cities, punishments were inflicted upon rebels ; here has been no blood shed.” Seckendorf says, “Most of the peasants in Electoral Saxony were Lutherans, who behaved more moderately, and were treated more mildly. More damage was done, in the popish provinces, especially in Franconia. In that single district, three hundred castles and convents were destroyed.”

We have traced the peasants’ war to its end in Germany. But the sect of the anabaptists, who fanned the flame, was not extinct, nor were the nations relieved from the pestilence of sedition. It next disturbed Switzerland, where Muncer, in exile had previously scattered the seeds. And the reformation, then

prospering under Zuingli, was as severely threatened, as it was in Germany. Muncer in his first visit to Switzerland, had communicated his views to Conrad Grebel, a man of ardent and restless mind, and also to Felix Mantz, a canon's son, and several other natives of Zurich. And Grebel sought to bring over Zuingli. Both he and Mantz had been soured by disappointment in expectation of professorships. Their efforts were aided by Hubmier, both in preaching and publishing. This aroused the spirit of Zuingli, who published a refutation of Hubmier's book by order of the council. And he held at Zurich, three public disputations, with the other two preachers of the sect. He next appeared before the city-council, and reasoned for three successive days, demolishing the anabaptist-argument with spirit and with power. And the council issued an order, sanctioning infant-baptism and requiring the anabaptist-preachers to be silent. But persecution the more inflamed them, and gave them a hold on popular sympathy. It is not by words alone, they cried, that we will testify for our cause, but we are ready to do it with our blood. Some girding their bodies with ropes, ran through the streets crying,—“Yet a few days, and Zurich will be destroyed. Woe, woe, woe to Zurich!” Several of them blasphemously said that the baptism of infants is but as the washing of a dog. And it is of no more use, than to baptise a cat. Fourteen men including Mantz, and seven women, were imprisoned, on allowance of bread and wa-

ter. But after confinement for a fortnight, they escaped by the removal of a plank, and went out by night, and declared, that an angel had opened their prison-doors and set them free.

They were joined by one Jacob Coira, a renegade monk, surnamed Blaurock, that is Bluecoat, from his wearing a blue dress. This monk by his eloquence had got the name of a second Paul. One Sunday he entered the church at Zollikon and with a thundering voice interrupted the preacher, exclaiming,—“It is written, My Father’s house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Then raising his staff, he struck the floor, and exclaimed,—“I am the door, by me if any man enter, he shall find pasture. I am the good shepherd, my body I give to the prison, and my life to the sword.”

In connexion with those abovenamed, others operated chiefly in secret, after the decree of the council against them, such as William Raubli, Panicellus Brodtlein, John Denk and Andrew Stultz. Hubmier was a preacher in Waldshuten, and after his defection, had involved the people there in mutual conflicts, which exposed them to the Austrian arms and to popish wiles; and then he fled to Zurich, and he skulked about among those of his sect, till he was arrested and called before the court, to defend his errors, out of the bible, in a debate with Zuingli. But rather than attempt this, he promised to recant; yet when the people had assembled, to hear his recanta-

tion, he re-affirmed his errors. Being blamed for this, he confessed, that he was instigated by Satan. At last he renounced his doctrine, and was dismissed from the city. But it is in human nature to desire, what is forbidden to it; stolen waters are sweet, and so new adherents to the cause were multiplied by the very means used to suppress it. Many secretly favored it, and its teachers sustained it with great zeal, artifice and eloquence. And many were drawn in by the novelty and strangeness of the doctrine, others were taken by a sympathy with the sufferings of the preachers, who seemed to be more wretched than wicked, more prodigal of their peace than of their faith, their obstinacy being mistaken for conscience, in a firm adherence to truth. At length the government of Zurich again took the matter in hand, and enacted severe laws, in 1530, imposing punishment by death on the anabaptist teachers, and heavy fines on those who received them. It should be some apology for this legislation, that anabaptism was, in itself, sedition and treason.

The district of Basle was also filled with the seeds of this pestilence. Ecolampadius encountered the authors of the mischief in 1525—29, and thoroughly discussed the subject of pædobaptism, magistracy and oaths; but of course without convincing his opponents.

Berne also had been disturbed by these men, more especially by Lewis Hetzer, John Travers and John Seckler. These were admitted to a public debate, in

the year 1528, but were refuted and silenced by Berthold Haller and Francis Kolb. But as their doctrines continued to be secretly diffused, it was determined, that for the more signal triumph of truth, there should be another public debate, and that before the full senate at Zofing in Argovia, in the jurisdiction of Berne, July 1532, between the ministers of Berne and the anabaptist-teachers. It was continued through nine days, and was taken down by public notaries, and published, with a happy effect, both in arresting the progress of the delusion, and in recalling the deluded. And this district now had rest from these disturbances, seven years. Afterwards new commotions arose, and were put down by force and severe laws.

But the pest inflicted a more severe visitation upon St. Gall. Grebel arrived there, and was received by his adherents with acclamation, and in presence of a vast assembly he administered the new baptism to a great number. Zuingle, grieved by the sad report of this agitation, composed a tract on baptism, which he sent to the council of St. Gall, who caused it to be read in the church. An anabaptist interrupted the reading and said, Give us the word of God, and not the word of Zuingle. Immediately a confusion of voices arose saying, Away with the book. At the same instant the anabaptists in a body rushed out of the house exclaiming, You may keep the word of Zuingle, and we will keep the word of God.

They then broke forth in wild disorder, alleging



that Christ required us to become as little children, they fell to imitating the sports of children. Men and women went dancing through the streets, clapping their hands, sitting upon the ground, and tumbling each other in the sand. Some threw the bible into the fire, saying, The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. Some fell into convulsions, under pretended revelations of the Spirit. Here was a specimen of the consistency of fanatics. Yesterday they were great sticklers for the written word. They cannot so much as hear an argument of Zuingli on baptism, because it was not the word of God. But to-day they throw this word of God upon the fire.

In a solitary house near St. Gall, lived a family of an aged farmer, John Schucker, with five sons. The whole family including servants had received the new baptism. A party of anabaptists had been invited to the house, for a merry-making. And the whole night was spent in a revel of fanaticism, in convulsions, visions and revelations. In the morning, Thomas one of the sons undertook to enact a revelation that could eclipse all the rest. He took the gall-bladder of a calf, and approaching his brother Leonard, he said to him, Thus bitter is the death thou art to suffer. He then added, Brother Leonard fall on thy knees. The terrified spectators said, Be careful what you do; his father and mother anxiously enquired what he meant. He told them not to be frightened, he would do nothing but what God had commanded. He then snatch-

a sword, and cut off his brother's head at a single blow. Then he said, The will of the Lord be done. The spectators were horror-struck, and the parents vented their shrieks and groans, and the farm resounded with lamentations. Thomas rushed out of the house, and ran half naked through the streets of St. Gall with wild gestures and haggard countenance, shouting, I proclaim the day of the Lord. He was arrested, but professed no sorrow, and insisted that it was not he, but God that did it. On the 16 of February 1527, the wretch was beheaded by the executioner. And more severe laws were made against the rabid prophets and their adherents, who were expelled from this district, to be troublers of others. But such impression was made by this tragedy, that the same blow took off the head of Thomas Schueker and the head of anabaptism in St. Gall.

The anabaptists in Switzerland did not confine their reforms to religion. They were not satisfied to have built a church after their model, the state must take the same shape. Indeed they made their church itself the state, and allowed no authorities to exist, but that of their prophets. So anabaptism was a name for a war of extermination against all governments. When summoned before the courts, they disobeyed the summons, maintaining that the authority of magistrates was a relic of paganism, and that no power but God's must be acknowledged. They taught, that it is unlawful for christians to hold office, or bear the sword,

and that community of goods is the perfection of humanity. And it was not strange, that civil society was roused, to cast out of its bosom so dangerous an element. And considering the previous habits of society, and how recently and imperfectly those states had emerged from papacy, it is not strange that they took such measures against a dangerous foe. Anabaptism was both sedition and heresy ; and the old laws, making heresy a capital crime, stood in full force. And if protestants had not resorted to severe measures to stay disorders so gross, the papists would have found an advantage against them, by holding them up as the abettors of anarchy. Besides, all the prepossessions of the public mind were for force, as the way of arresting wild opinions. But it deserves to be told to the honor of Zuingli, that he gave no countenance to any persecuting measures, having made the difficult discovery, that bad opinions can neither be drowned, hanged, nor burnt.

Alarmed at the growing disorders, and knowing no other remedy, and seeing, that the spread of anabaptism was itself the spread of rebellion, the government determined to make an example of Mantz, and condemned him to be drowned. He was put into a boat, and rowed out upon the lake. His mother and brother followed to the water's edge, exhorting him to be faithful unto death. When the fatal plunge was given, the brother wept, but calm and undaunted, the mother flashed fire in her eye, at the martyrdom of her

son. The same day, Blaurock was scourged with rods, outside the city. And he shook his blue dress, as well as the dust from his feet, as a testimony against them. Thence he went to Tyrol, where two years after he was burnt by the papists.

These events give a clue to the cause of the burning of Servetus, for which Calvin's memory has been so much aspersed. These who have advanced in dialectics, far enough to fetch from the allegation, that Calvin burnt Servetus, the mighty conclusion, that Calvin's doctrines were unscriptural, seem not to know, that Servetus was only one out of a great cloud of witnesses, who died as martyrs to the same ruinous and blasphemous principles, and to whose death the most of the other reformers consented, as really as Calvin consented to the death of Servetus. Luther, long before and when the full atrocity of anabaptist doctrines and practice had hardly begun to be seen, blew the war-blast and summoned the rulers, to draw the sword and defend their people by cutting off thousands, that were engaged in essentially the same conspiracy as was Servetus. In addition to a participation in the rebellions of the anabaptists, he employed his wits, to invent and divulge the worst possible blasphemies. The epithet which he applied to the Trinity on all occasions was,—Three-headed Cerberus, that is dog of hell. To say nothing of his other crimes, that of blasphemy in which he most probably never had an equal this side of hell, by the

laws of his country, copied from the laws of God, was punishable with death. Yet right or wrong, Calvin had no pre-eminence of responsibility in the case; for though he considered him worthy of punishment, he remonstrated against the infliction of such a punishment. Hence it is not true, that Calvin burnt Servetus, or that he procured his burning. But is true that that act had the written sanction of Melancthon and other leading reformers. But the saying has gone abroad, that Calvin burnt Servetus: and it is too valuable a thought, to be suffered to die. So it has been stereotyped in the abodes of religious ignorance and hatred, and thousands who even know nothing else of Calvin, and who think of Servetus, as of a saint and martyr, of the order of Polycarp, have learned to answer every evangelical doctrine with these all-sufficient words,—Calvin burnt Servetus.

The vigorous measures against the anabaptists in Switzerland, made it a discouraging field for them. Satan now transferred his forces to Germany, and invaded some of the most important cities there. He attempted to sow his tares in Strasburg, by the hand of Hoffman, in Worms by Kant, in Augsburg by James a Currier, in Ulm by Kleiter, and in other places by others. But the governments having learnt by sad experience the nature and fruits of the doctrine, put forth all vigilance against it, and the ministers met it, wherever it showed itself, with prompt refutations. Yet the fires kindled by the false teachers,

and by such means suppressed, lay concealed under treacherous ashes, and were ever and anon breaking forth anew.

Many of the sect excluded from Switzerland, and Upper Germany, went over into Moravia, and there found men of their own spirit, and got up assemblies under various pretences, and effectually diffused the leaven. Next the pest invaded Bohemia, Hungary, Austria and Silesia. And everywhere sedition and tumult were the indications of its presence. Many of the preachers were arrested and put to death. Hubmier, so conspicuous in the tumults in Switzerland, here attained his crown of martyrdom. He was arrested in Moravia, and brought to Vienna and there he was burnt. His sect regarding it as a splendid instance of martyrdom, were inflamed with new zeal, and found new encouragment and success. Here the artifice of a community of goods was specially attractive, to the multitude whose visions of paradise were to be realized in plunder of the rich. This circumstance however wrought embarrassment, by attracting the worst of men, it combined elements that could not long cohere. Soon the party split into divisions and subdivisions. The principal branches in Moravia, were the Hutterians, named after James Hutter, and the Gabrielites, named from Gabriel Scherding.

Nor was Lower Germany any more free from like tumults. The flourishing provinces of Westphalia, Friesland and Holland, were sadly vexed by the new

prophets. Pretending to visions and revelations, and backing the pretence by an affectation of great sanctity, they succeeded to poison a great multitude. But Munster, a renowned city of Westphalia, took it the most fatally, and was the theatre of tragedies rare and shocking.

Deferring however the recital of those events, till the next chapter, we here pause a moment on the inquiry, What is fanaticism? We have seen something of its operations, which may help us to estimate its nature. And from what we have here seen, we should not conclude that fanaticism is what some suppose, an excess of real piety, or piety well meaning but off its track, and a little wild in its movements. All history shows the fruits and spirit of fanaticism to be the exact opposites of those of christian piety, as opposite as are the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the devil. Malignity is its presiding spirit, and destruction to all that is valuable, to man and in man, is its natural fruit. It prefers lofty claims, to the highest style of religion. But it is the religion of the devil, taking holy names and garbs, the better to do the devil's work. If that which makes a man a destroyer of himself for time and for eternity, that which inflames the heart with hatred to gospel truth, hatred to the order and peace of society to all the settled institutions of religion and humanity, yea hatred to the human race, under some high sounding pretence of new unfoldings of philanthropy fresh from the skies,—if that be an



excess of true religion, we are deeply concerned to escape that excess.

Indeed the religion of the gospel has no more determined enemy, than fanaticism. It is not the excess of zeal, but zeal in a bad cause, and under the direction of a bad spirit, and generated by bad principles. If the zeal be according to knowledge, excited in view of divine truth, and centering in love to God, it cannot be excessive. Paul says, It is good always to be zealously affected in a good thing. Any affection of the renewed heart, that is any grace of the Spirit, if it be genuine, may with safety be carried to the highest possible elevation. When it comes nearest to an angel's zeal, it is removed the farthest from fanaticism. Fanaticism is a zeal, not according to knowledge, not kindled in view of truth spiritually apprehended. It is kindled in view of some delusion, that ministers some selfish gratification. The fanatic raises a blaze in his imagination, constructs in his mind an exciting and stimulating error, as a means of excitement, similar to that sought in tragic representations. Yea he makes a stage of his own fancy, and on it enacts tragic illusions, causing them to dance before the mind, in a ceaseless phantasmagoria, for the sake of a luxury of the mental excitement, and the indulgence of that passion, which sways the theatre-going multitude. This is the zeal and religion of the fanatic, but the christian's zeal kindles in view of the holy, humbling and purifying truths of the gospel.

## CHAPTER VI.

We have brought down the narrative to the time of the commencement of the Munster-tragedy. The date of the worst scenes of this tragedy was about ten years after the opening of the peasants' wars, that is in 1535. But this tragedy had its remote springs in doctrines and influences, generated in the laboratory of Muncer and company. In these ten years, these fanatical doctrines, like the seed of the thistle, had been borne on every breeze, over all the German states, in spite of the vigilance of the ministry, the rigors of the law, and the industry and energy of magistrates. And it everywhere became the most dangerous form of rebellion. Nor was it confined to Germany, but it sought to embrace the world. It professed to look to the immediate erection of Christ's kingdom on earth, and his appearance to reign in person. So the sect was ever busy in sending emisaries abroad in every direction, to sow their draggon's teeth in every kingdom. A secret colony of them went over to England very early, as appeared from a letter one of

them, which was intercepted. At the close of the scenes at Munster, we find the anabaptist king offering to stipulate, for the surrender of the whole sect in England, as though it were there thus early, an object worth the attention of the government.

We have seen, that after the death of Muncer and his party, and after the suppression of the smaller seditions in Switzerland, the sect was far from being exterminated. The vigilance of the police and the labors of the ministry, aided by the remembrance of the bitter fruits of sedition, prevented any formidable concentration of the seditious element in Upper Germany. But every sower of the seeds of sedition, as soon as he was ferretted out, made tracks for Lower Germany, causing a dense accumulation of pestilential matter there. They sought out especially those towns, where they could find the most ignorant people, and indolent ministry, hoping there to find the love of novelties and revolutions. Thus they had effected a dense sprinkling of the sect, through Holland, Friesland and the vicinity. In many places they got such a force, that chains and prisons could not restrain. The ministers of delusion, in their flight from the officers of justice, spread their doctrines through lanes and streets, deposited them in secret corners, and posted them by the wayside. Their proclamations floated on every breeze, announcing, that Christ was coming at once, to judge the world, and visit a terrible vengeance on all who would not at once quit their

possessions, and flee from Babylon, and receive another baptism.

But the interesting events then occurring in the city of Munster, made that a point of attraction, for the agitators. Munster was a renowned city, the capital of Westphalia, the seat of the bishop, and of a distinguished university, and fortified both by nature and art. This city was selected by this pestilent sect for a center of operations. These robbers when they chose it for their den, fixed upon this city the name of Zion, and New Jerusalem. And to have got such a name from them was to have received its doom. Just before these birds ill omen lighted upon it, this city had been the scene, of a remarkable and sudden reformation from popery; too sudden perhaps to be lasting. One reason why the anabaptists succeeded to introduce confusion there, was that they made the onset in the very infancy of the reformation there, before the popular mind, just emerged from darkness and bondage, had been instructed and grounded in the truths of the gospel. In the year 1531 there was no protestant preaching in the city, except that Bernard Rothman preached in the church of St. Maurice outside the walls of the city. But his preaching attracted crowds from the city, and gave impulse to an extensive desire, to settle him in the city. In order to prevent this, the papists hired Rothman with money, to leave the place, and go and exercise his ministry somewhere else. And by thus allowing the gift of

God to be purchased with money, he gave a presage of his future course. After preaching successfully for some months in several places, he returned, in violation at least of the spirit of his agreement. The papists attempted in vain to hinder his preaching; being overruled by the popular will. Some prominent citizens received him into the city; and as churches had been denied him, they erected pulpits in the porches of their houses. His hearers increased daily. Demands were made upon the papists for the use of the churches, and these backed by threats of violence. Next some principal citizens sent to the Landgrave of Hesse, for him to send over some prominent reformed preachers to help forward the work. And he sent two from Marpurg, Godfried Strahlen, and Peter Wirthem. The reformed soon became so reinforced as to count six teachers, and to lay their plans to use them to the best advantage. They made out a list of thirty errors of popery, and presented it to the city council with a pledge, to convince them, that they were repugnant to the scriptures, or to suffer punishment, as disturbers of the peace. The council accepted the pledge, and ordered the popish priests to come into court, and showed them the thirty articles, and reminded them, that they had always professed, to base their teaching on the scriptures, and required them to make good their assertion, at the peril of their lives, and required them to decide at once whether they would undertake the defence of their doctrine from

the scriptures. The priests saw, that the council had driven them into a corner, and they openly confessed, they had nothing to say, except that they had hitherto claimed the bible as the basis of their doctrine, in ignorance, and not with an intent to deceive.

Being thus convicted of false doctrine, they were required to refrain from teaching, and their churches were opened to reformed teachers, and one to each was assigned to six. At this the adhering papists became highly exasperated, especially those who had worshipped at the cathedral, and who belonged to the aristocracy. And as they had no other remedy they applied to their bishop, and with him they formed a plan, for coercing the city-council into their terms, by obstructing all approach to the city with provisions. All the avenues to the city were obstructed by guards. The bishop met his friends in a little village about a mile from the walls. Thence they sent a message to the council, ordering them to desist from their course and to restore all things as before, or to be treated as enemies, and face the brunt of war.

The bishop was Count Francis Waldeck, whose immediate predecessor, a brother of the arch bishop of Calogne, had of his own accord and to the astonishment of the public, resigned and retired to private life. Possibly as a prudent man, he foresaw the evil, and hid himself. The city-council received the message, and deliberated awhile, and then detained the messenger. Night came on, it was the night prece-

ding Christmas, and they sent out an armed force, and took the little town by surprise, occupying all its gates, so that none could escape, and so made prisoners of the bishop's party, and failed of securing the bishop himself, because he had just left the place. The prisoners, a part of whom were leaders in the popish party, were brought into the city. The council asked them, if they now intended to hinder the reformed teaching? Their tone was changed, and they agreed in writing, not to hinder the reformation in the city. A copy of the agreement was sent to the Landgrave of Hesse, and his aid was invoked in favor of the reformation. He sent over some of his ministers who aided to complete the settlement of the conditions of the reconciliation. It was agreed, that six churches should be had by the reformed, and that all popish superstitions should be excluded from them. But in the cathedral, belonging more especially to the aristocracy, nothing was to be changed. The treaty was signed by the bishop and his friends, and by the Landgrave and the citizens, and was executed Feb. 14, 1533.

So rapid was the reformation in this city, that it failed to acquire root and firmness, sufficient to withstand a tempest. The people just brought out of the darkness of popery into the marvellous light of the gospel, had not acquired that discrimination, and that experience of the power of the truth, which were needful to withstand the cunning of deceivers, and the arts



of the great deceiver. But all went on prosperously for a while, till some anabaptists from abroad had got into the city. The chief of these were John Matthias, a baker from Harlæm, and John Bockold, a tailor from Leyden. They at first cautiously refrained from broaching their opinions, till they had well surveyed the ground. Then they began by asking questions of the teachers, as if they wanted information, and by degrees they assumed the boldness to dogmatise, deride and condemn the practice of infant baptism. When their purpose was discovered, and their operations made public, Rothman in a sermon, called upon the people to pray, that they might be preserved from the corruptions of the anabaptists, who were creeping in, and whose doctrines, should they prevail, would destroy both religion and the country. At this juncture, there came one Strapeda, who became a colleague of Rothman. He had been under instruction of Henry Rollius, who had been executed for anabaptism at Utrecht. He commenced preaching against infant baptism. The reformed pulpit was divided against itself, and the signal was given to awake the elements of disorder. Private meetings were held in many places, to which none but anabaptists were admitted. For even now they did not openly profess their whole sentiments, nor did they teach them, but in nocturnal assemblies, in the dark appropriately performing their dark mysteries, while other men slept. Afterwards, what was done in secret was revealed.

And most of the citizens were indignant, and complained that a new doctrine, and such a doctrine, had been disseminated among them by stealth, and in the night. And the council issued a decree, expelling the leaders of the sect from the city. But they soon returned, by another road, and boasted that they were now reinforced by a special command from God, to remain and maintain their cause, with all their might. Their boldness, zeal, and determination, made a great impression on the council, mingled with not a little wonder. And already the new teachers, by a seductive manner of teaching, and by an affectation of rare piety, had drawn around them great numbers. Those who were in debt, or in poverty, or who for any reason were interested in breaking up the existing order of things, flocked around their standard. And to these were added an increasing rabble of strangers, attracted in from the surrounding country. Rothman trimmed his sails to the popular breeze. Though he at first moderately opposed the anabaptists, he now espoused their cause. And now was revealed the reason, why he was so easily bought off, by the papists, when he was so successful in preaching the reformed doctrines. He was joined in his defection also by Strapeda, and Strahlen, and others. The city being thus anew divided into factions, the council appointed a public disputation, and commanded the anabaptists to meet the reformed preachers, in public debate. The reformed cause, in this debate,

was conducted by Herman Bush, John Glandorp, Peter Wirthem, and John Holtman. They made a triumphant vindication of the truth, and the council commanded the anabaptist leaders to leave the city. But they plead, that they could not safely pass through the bishop's territory. To meet this plea, the council procured for them a safe conduct from the bishop, and sent them away in a body. But they had arranged their plans to remain, and so they skulked about a long time, in the vicinity, in secret intercourse with their friends in the city. And they kept affairs in such agitation, that the number of anabaptists in the city increased daily. In the meantime, the council closed all the churches in the city, but one, lest the anabaptists should come in, in such numbers as to take possession, and raise a disturbance and expel the preachers.

In November, the Landgrave, at the council's request, sent thither two new teachers, Fabricius and Melsinger. The latter, having heard of the disturbance, and fearing the danger, returned. But the other wrought vigorously, and stood his ground, and remained till he was driven from it by force. The government also permitted Peter Wirthem to begin again to preach. But soon, at the instigation of Rothman, he was expelled from the pulpit, by violence of the anabaptists, who now challenged Fabricius and others to a public debate. The council assented, and ordered that the debate should be con-

ducted from the scriptures, and that certain learned and good men should be admitted as umpires; and that their decision should be binding on the city, and so restore peace. But Rothman and his friends rejected these terms. And to avoid the consequent public odium, he and his friends invented the short and easy method of a pretence, of a new and special revelation. Pretending a miraculous impulse, they rushed through the streets, vociferating, "Repent, and be baptised, for the wrath of God is coming upon you." Now arose a general tumult, and confusion; and all that had been re-baptised, joined in this cry in the streets. Many simple, well-meaning people, overcome with the tempest of words, and the sympathies of the scene, and the fear of the wrath of God, submitted to be re-baptised. Others did the same, to preserve their property. For now the anabaptists claimed the right to plunder the goods of all who opposed them. This was about the end of December; and now all the banished leaders had come out of their lurking places. And this clamor about the streets, for men to repent, and be baptised, had arisen to a higher pitch, and the demands assumed a bolder tone. The alternative now was, be baptised or slain. They took possession of the public arsenals, and offered violence to the courts and citizens. Some of the citizens, in order to defend themselves and friends from injury, resorted to a part of the city that was fortified by nature, and seized many of the

other party. The anabaptists fortified themselves in the market place. Thus was the city split into two hostile armies. This position of the parties was retained, till, by an exchange of hostages, a compromise was effected, and it was solemnly stipulated that all might return to their homes, and peaceably enjoy their own religion.

In the meantime, Rothman and Bernard Cnipperdoling, though they professed to be highly pleased with the compromise, secretly sent letters through the vicinity, to the anabaptists, inviting them to leave all their possessions, and come into the city, and share the plunder of their opponents. The tenor of their letter missive was, that a prophet, sent from God, had come to Munster, and, by a spirit of prophecy, foretold wonderful things, and that he teaches the right way of salvation. And they must leave all, and come into the city, and there have all abundance, and be in want of nothing. They might leave all their property behind, for in the city they would find tenfold, of what they had left. They must also leave their wives behind, if they would conform to the word of God, and hasten to the city as soon as possible. This proclamation was received with joy by many of the sect, raising in them delirious expectations of a new commonwealth, where the poor and rich should be all on a level. Men oppressed with debt, or poverty, or men thirsting for liberty, or coveting the wealth of others, felt powerfully the temptation to engage in

the rash adventure, and in a few days a vast multitude of the lowest and worst of men had collected from the whole vicinity.

The people of the town, and especially the wealthy, were seized with consternation. They saw the game that was playing, and concluded it best to leave all that they could not carry with them, and escape, when they could. This was in February, 1534. Their departure weakened the reformed party. So that the anabaptists deposed the city government, and created a new one. And over them they appointed consuls, of whom Cnipperdoling was the first.

Soon after this they demolished the church of St. Maurice, in the suburbs, and burnt all the buildings connected with it, and almost ruined the cathedral. Now they run through all the streets and ways, crying, "Repent, and go out, ye miscreants, or your life is in danger." After having thus warned all who opposed them, to flee from the city, armed men next patrolled the streets, to expel from the city all who were not of their sect. And immediately after expelling them, they seized upon their property.

This expulsion occurred the day before the bishop's troops commenced the siege of the city. The bishop, when he saw the city reduced as it was in its strength by these internal commotions, concluded it would be a favorable time to bring his forces against it, and bring the city to submission to his own terms. The terms which he had formerly made with the

council of the city having been violated by its new masters, no longer bound him. And the reformed and the anabaptists were equal enemies to him, and his cause. He therefore commenced a siege. And some of the fugitives, fleeing before the madness of the anabaptists, fell into his hands. Two of these were preachers, one of whom was Peter Wirthem. And they were saved from the danger into which they had come, by the intervention of the Landgrave. And many in the city, who would have left, were now prevented by the danger without. At this time John Matthias, now the leading prophet of the anabaptists, announced a revelation, that all should bring together what they had, of gold or silver, or moveable property, into the common stock, in a public store, appointed for the purpose. And death was the penalty of refusal. The people were astonished at the severity of the edict. But there was no way of evasion. The liberty which they had sought might have been of a different kind. But that which they found, was not the liberty of holding property of their own. They sought the liberty of plundering others' goods, but found the liberty of surrendering their own. Two young females, assuming to be prophetesses, pretended to be able, by a spirit of prophecy, to detect all who kept back a part. And this, with those who believed in such prophecy, was enough to insure a faithful delivery. Thus there was a collection made, of the moveable property of the people



then residing in the city, and of those that had been expelled. And deacons were appointed, with the charge of receiving and distributing, according to the necessities of each. But they did not trust wholly to the spirit of prophecy, to secure a complete gathering of the stores. Diligent search was made in every house, and all the valuable property was brought into the common treasury. The splendid houses, vacated by the rich, and nobles expelled, were assigned to the poorest. All were required to take their meals at a common table, and the provisions were spent with great economy; a regular order of dishes was assigned, consisting one day of fresh meats, one of smoked meat, and the next of salt fish; and all were required to pass from their meals to their regular labor upon the fortifications. None were allowed to see their families, except once in three days, and that in the middle of the day. And if any man left his work, and was gone three days without permission of the captain, and without the knowledge of his wife, she was allowed to get another husband.

And this may be a convenient place, to introduce a notice of the code of laws which was afterwards established by royal authority, when that was set up. In the first place, every member of the community was required, first of all, to abjure and anathematize all the ceremonies and forms of exercise in common use, in public worship. They had much reason to reject many ceremonies then in use; but to reject

all forms of worship, is an absurdity, in any but atheists.

In the second place, they were required to abominate the mass. And this not without reason, but the idolatry of the mass was innocent, compared with the Thystean and Cyclopean feasts of these anabaptists, in which lust and murder profusely mingled.

In the third place, they were required to renounce the world. This is an important requirement, rightly understood. But as practised by the anabaptists, it profited little.

4. They were forbidden to pay, or to receive annual rents. Here is a law well befitting a community of thieves and robbers, such as these were, proceeding from a perverse notion of christian liberty, by which these phrenzied men were led astray. The liberty of the gospel is a freedom from sin, death, and hell, and from the power of satan ; but not a freedom from the authority of parents and of magistrates—not a freedom from the payment of honest debts, and from rendering to all their own. For Christ, the author of christian liberty, tells us to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. And his apostle tells us to render to all their dues.

5. They were required not to trade, make bargains, or exercise commerce in any way. This law was practicable, only to men who lived in such communities, and were fed and worked like slaves, and had no care to provide for their own. And for that reason,

the anabaptists afterward, and from necessity, threw it off. Some fanatics in our day have tried to revive it, so far as to live without the use of money. But they have illustrated their own folly, and then yielded to necessity. Men are so made, that they must of necessity live in society. And this social condition cannot be preserved, without an interchange of labors and duties; that is, without bargains, commercial acts, and an exchange of labors, offices, and commodities. Xenophon says, correctly, that "Nature has decreed, that one shall depend upon another; because one has more than enough of what is wanting to another." Therefore God, in his wisdom, has ordained that negotiations between one and another shall be among the bonds of human society. And men might as well subsist without the use of fire and water, as without them.

6. It was required that no one should have private property, but that, after the supposed example of the first christians, and after the theory of the Platonic republic, they should lay all at the feet of their prophets. But as to the example of the first christians, it is a rule of sound reasoning, that an example does not bind, unless it concurs with a universal rule. But there is no universal rule of scripture, ordaining a community of goods; whence the example is of no force. And should we grant, that there was in the church at Jerusalem, such a community of goods as figures in the brain of these men, it would yet be

evident, that this example was special and peculiar, and not required of the whole church. For neither Paul, nor the other apostles, anywhere else sanctioned this community. But that community of goods, which Luke commends in the Acts, was not such as the anabaptists, and some existing fanatics, have labored to introduce. Since every christian retained the government of his own family, and his own affairs, as in the case of Tabitha, Simon the tanner, Lydia, and Mary the mother of John. Therefore, when Luke says, that no one said that aught which he possessed was his own, but believers had all things common, he does not mean, that all property was actually brought into one mass; but that, for the present use, and for the subsistence of christians, multitudes of whom were away from home, without provision, they, as far as occasion required, held their property at the disposal of the apostles, or each one, from his own property, as occasion required, spent, for the common interests of the church, as freely as if nought that he had was his own. Thus, the goods of christians were, for the time, common for use, but not for permanent possession. And hence there was no actual bringing into a common stock, any further than present need required. Besides, even this community of goods was authoritatively enjoined upon no one. For Peter says to Annanias, While it remained, was it not thine own, and after it was sold was it not in thine own power? Whence we infer that it was imposed as a

law upon no one. And the assertion, that they had all things common, is about equivalent to the Pythagorean proverb, "With friends, all things are common." But by this the Pythagoreans did not mean to deny, that each one has his own family, wife, children, property, profession, and business. Nor does that community which Luke commends, exclude such an economy. His words are, Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessed of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet. That is, the property of christians was at the command of the apostles, so far as needful to meet the wants of the strangers then tarrying at Jerusalem, without a home, and upon expense. It is only asserted, that they did not claim a right to their own property, to the exclusion of those who had need, but shared it in common with them, so far as their need required. And then, as if to show that this sale of possessions, was not actual, and entire, in the case of all, it is added that two persons out of the company actually sold all; and that Annanias pretended to have sold all, and surrendered all the price, and did not. We are not, then, to understand that all of them actually vacated their whole property, but that they held themselves ready to do it, entirely, if need be, and actually did it, so far as the expenses of the thousands of christian strangers then at Jerusalem, consumed it. This jus-

tifies the language of the historian. And, in a like sense, the apostles are said to have left all, and followed Christ. And yet their having left it, did not imply an absolute alienation of their property. For afterwards it is said, that Christ came into Simon's house. And he taught the multitude from Peter's ship. And Christ committed his mother to John's adoption and support. This would have been unmeaning, unless John had possessions, and permanent means of living. And the disciples, after Christ's death, seem to have gone to fishing, in their own ships. Thus these fanatics are quite mistaken, in quoting the example of the first christians.

Nor is there any other warrant in scripture for that notion. Pious men are not commanded to give up all property. Paul says, Charge them that are rich in this world—what? that they throw away their riches?—no, but that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches. And he admonishes the Thessalonians to study to be quiet, and do their own business, and work with their own hands, that they might walk honestly towards them that are without, and have lack of nothing.

7. They were required to be subject to no magistrates, or princes, because the regenerate are no longer led by the flesh, but by the spirit, and may therefore be under the power of no one. Here it seems they sought to be spiritual, in a sense in which Christ and his apostles were not spiritual. For they

obeyed magistrates, and taught others to obey. But these men called themselves spirtual, while they bore the very marks by which Peter distinguishes those who walk after the flesh in the lusts of uncleanness; that is, they despise government, and are presumptuous, and self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. A better description of non-resistants, ancient or modern, cannot be given in so few terms. And Jude gives it in almost the same terms, connecting carnality with such perverse assumptions of spirituality. He says, Likewise these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise governments, and speak evil of dignities. To show that these were next to the ravings of madmen, these very laws were enacted by one claiming to be a king, and taking state with more than Asiatic pomp, and exercising a tyranny more despotic than that of the czars; a tyranny from which none of the miserable subjects immured in a walled city, could escape with life. And yet, as if to mock their misery, the tyrant issues a law, that they shall obey no law. This requirement is pretended to be drawn from the spirit. But it is no less than an emission of the foetid breath of satan, against the express requirements of the Holy Spirit. For thus speaks the Holy Ghost, touching the authority and sanctity of the magistracy: There is no power but of God; for the powers that be, are ordained of God. He is the minister of God, and he beareth not the sword in vain. Hence magistrates, in scripture, are



called gods, not in respect of their persons, but of the dignity of their office. And Christ recognizes the fact, that he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, appointing to office. And heavenly wisdom says, By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. And the spirit of prophecy foretold of the christian church : Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers. And an apostle requires christians to pray for kings, and for all in authority. And let every soul be subject to the higher powers ; for he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And to pay tribute to whom tribute is due ; to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. If christians were required to submit to heathen magistrates, much more must they to christian magistrates.

8. The re-baptised, if married, were required to renew their marriages. That is, if two persons were in a married state, and one was re-baptised and the other refused to repeat the baptism, the first was required to marry some other person. And if a wife happened to bear no children, the husband was required to take another wife, in addition to the first. This requirement was only the beginning of licentiousness, which we shall see in the end had a fearful issue, as such attempts to modify God's law of marriage always do.

9. They were required to regard the baptism of infants as proceeding from the devil. And some

commenced the practice of baptizing with fire, instead of water. They set burning candles, in a circle, around the person to be baptized, and called this a baptism with fire.

This view of the laws formally enacted in Munster, the only place where the anabaptists had, for any considerable time, the power to do as they would, and exemplify their own principles, is important, to illustrate their true character. And we now resume the thread of their history. The prophet commanded all books in the city, except the bible, to be burnt, as useless and impious. For fanaticism and barbarism usually go hand in hand, as haters of knowledge, and of the apparatus of science. The execution of this command involved the destruction of a very valuable public library. They had, for this measure, probably as good a reason, as had a man at Marpurg, who, in those times, cut into shreds a large library of his own, and threw it out the window. The government called him up to answer for the misdemeanor, and he came forth clothed only in a shirt, and calling himself the truth's fool, or jester, and giving for his strange act, the reason, that the second commandment forbade the worship of idols; that books, whether heathen or christian, were idols, and he cleared them out of the way, so as not to be tempted to idolatry. And Mahomet gave a reason about as good, when he commanded the great library of Alexandria, the great library of the world, whose loss the world has ever

since deplored—to be burnt. He said, if those books contained anything against the Koran, or anything that was not embraced in the Koran, they ought to be burnt. And if they contained only that which was in the Koran, there was no need of them, and might be burnt.

But the measures which the prophet of Muncer took for the defence of the city, savored more of the prudent general, than of the mad fanatic. He collected vast magazines of every kind, repaired and extended the fortifications. Those able to bear arms, were formed into organized troops, and so drilled as to combine the vigor of discipline with the impetuosity of enthusiasm. He himself set the example, refusing no labor, repining at no hardships. And he kept the passions and enthusiasm of the people ever awake, by constantly new revelations and prophecies.

It so happened that a blacksmith, by the name of Hubert Trutling, dropped an expression calculated to throw ridicule upon the prophet. The fact was reported to him, and the whole people convoked, and the man condemned to die. The people were smitten with terror. First of all, the prophet seized his victim, threw him upon the ground, and pierced him with a spear, and then leaped upon him with all his might. Then he commanded him to be taken away, and while it was done, he stabbed him again. And as he saw the man was not yet dead, he uttered a prophecy over him, and said, that he would not die,

for God had shown him that his time had not yet come. But he did die, very soon. And this fact impaired the influence of the prophet's predictions; and he had need to do something to heal his wounded authority. So he seized a spear, and sallied out at the head of some chosen troops, and by surprise came upon a portion of the besieging army, and made a great slaughter, and returned with much spoil. Intoxicated with this success, he came forth the next day, brandishing his spear and declaring that in imitation of Gideon, he would go forth with a handful of men, and smite the hosts of the ungodly. Thirty men, without hesitation, followed his wild career, and rushing upon the enemy with frantic courage, were cut off to a man. Thus ended the race of Matthias, the first prophet of Munster. He may be truly said to have died in carrying out his own principles, and thus to have died a martyr to them.

But here we must suspend the narrative till the next chapter.

And in this connection it is pertinent to reflect on the true nature and intent of that part of the fanatic theory, which demands the leveling of society, or the community of goods. There is no reason to suppose that these men, before they came to this place, when abroad, here and there, preaching up this doctrine, and without the power to enforce their principles, were any more or less sincere, than are the fanatics of the present day, preaching the same doctrine,

under similar circumstances. The doctrine then was only an intellectual conception, framed by a desire to come in unlawful possession of others' property, and a warfare of feeling against those laws and arrangements of divine providence, which distributes an inequality of fortune. The pretext of their preaching was universal liberty and equality, but the real object of it, was the plunder of others' property. This was proved by the most convincing of all proof—their subsequent conduct. For as soon as, by their preaching, they got the power to execute their wish, they actually perpetrated the plunder. Now, as to those among us who hold such doctrines, and partially or wholly avow them, it is hardly probable, that with all the hindrances now in their way, they will ever execute such intentions. But the doctrine which lies in their minds, is, in its origin, nature, and tendency, the same as that which wrought the Munster tragedies. It is nothing more nor less than a desire of plunder. Disguise it as they may, under names of emancipation, universal freedom, blessed equality, when you have reduced it to plain English, it means the privilege of exercising power over the powerful, and of becoming rich by the plunder of the rich. It is quite possible, that these men never suspected themselves as actuated by a motive so unlovely; that they never have analysed their views and intentions, so as to discover this principle, lurking among them. Yet it is enough to have given the his-

torical proof that we have given, and might, to a great extent, multiply, that that theory, whenever it comes up, is, in its origin and tendency, a spirit of violence and plunder. Then we are warranted in laying the responsibility of such a principle at the door of all who avow it, and saying, If you wish the leveling principle to be carried out, we know why you wish it. You wish it for the same reasons with others who have gone before you. Your moon-struck visions of benevolence, are but visions of robbery and plunder. And if we may judge the future by the past, robbery and plunder would be the sure result of the success of your schemes.

And now we see the broadly beneficent nature of christian principles. The gospel is a firm and sure support of those institutions and of that condition of society, which best suits the nature and interests of man, for time and for eternity. It does not, indeed, attempt to nullify the ordinance, that the poor we shall have with us always—an ordinance of God, which no inventions of men ever did or ever will evade. But it best consults the true interests of men, in all conditions, providing for the protection of civil rights, and human intercourse, by the enactment and execution of wholesome laws, and making, for the wants of the immortal part, adequate provisions, and inculcating, by adequate sanctions, a godliness which is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

## CHAPTER VII.

I had brought the history of the siege of Munster down to the time when the first prophet, Matthias, was killed. The death of their prophet smote the city with great consternation. But it seems the prophet's mantle had seasonably fallen upon another; and the spirit of satanic inspiration lingered among the people, after the soul of Matthias had fled. Buckold stepped forward to fill the breach, with equal pretensions to supernatural gifts; and at once, he revived the faith and hopes of the people, so as to get supreme direction of affairs. He told them, not to be disturbed in their minds, since this death had been revealed to him long before; and that it had been further revealed to him, that he should marry the prophet's wife—a revelation, by the way, more natural than supernatural, since the widow was a young woman of very superior beauty and attractions, and Buckold himself short of twenty-five years of age.

The new prophet had not the courage and rashness of the old; and he satisfied himself with maintaining a



mere defensive war, till his new recruits should arrive from Holland and the neighboring countries. Though less daring as a soldier, he was more bold and wild as a prophet. Having, by obscure hints of prophecy, prepared the minds of the people for some remarkable event, he stripped himself naked, and marched through the streets, proclaiming with a loud voice, that the kingdom of Zion is at hand; that whatever is highest on earth must be brought the lowest, and whatever is lowest, must be exalted; and to fulfil his prophecy, and be obedient to his heavenly vision, he began by ordering the churches and the loftiest buildings, in the city, to be demolished. Then he degraded the senators, that had been appointed by Matthias. And to Cnipperdoling, who had been consul, or chief magistrate, he gave a sword, and by that token constituted him executioner, and brought him down from highest to lowest; and he accepted the office with more than humble submission. He fell upon his knees, and poured out special thanksgivings for the honor conferred in thus degrading him. But his new office was far from being a sinecure. For such was the savage tyranny and cruelty of the spirit that reigned, that the executioner's office was most in demand. All things now tended to violence and war. Even the bells of the churches were cast into cannon.

The bishop's forces had now for a long time besieged the city; but being reinforced by other Ger-

man princes, he made an attempt to take the city by storm. He was repulsed, and the siege was continued. One circumstance which tended to confirm these wretched spirits in the delusion, as to the inspiration of their prophets, was, that the city, by the strength of its impregnable fortifications, was able to stand so long against the power of a great army, immediately about them. Being themselves but a handful, surrounded by an host, with all their engines of war, and standing there unharmed from week to week, and from month to month, it might naturally seem to simple minds, that the powers above were their shield; and so they were predisposed to listen to the splendid visions of their prophets.

Now Buckold prepared himself for another revelation. He retired, and seemed to sleep for three days and nights. He then came forth, called for a paper, and said nothing, till he had drawn out a new constitution of government. He wrote the names of twelve men, some of whom had been noblemen by birth, who were to be at the head of affairs as heads of tribes in Israel. This he asserted he had received by divine appointment. An untoward event now paved the way for another revelation. A stranger, who had deserted from the bishop's army, lodged in his family, and in the night happened to be a witness of Buckold's committing, with one of his domestics, a crime not to be named. He gave the stranger a large reward to conceal the fact. But yet he had misgivings, lest,

after all, the secret would come out, and impair his authority as a prophet so intimate with the counsels of heaven. He cast about him for the means for standing on higher ground, above all fear from detection. He determined to fortify himself by a new revelation. So he summoned together the preachers, before the assembled multitude, and thus addressed them: Is it lawful for a man to have more wives than one? I appeal to you, preachers. What do the scriptures teach? Then he tasked them to prove, if they could, from the bible, that a man might not have as many wives as he would. But these preachers, in adopting anabaptist views, had already put down the paramount authority of the scriptures, as a rule of faith, making each one's own reason, or light within, or convictions of what is reasonable and desirable, the standard; and of course they had a hard task, out of the broken chain of a nullified scripture, to fabricate an argument, effectual against the impetuous rush of sensual passion, reinforced as that passion always is, by the impulses of fanaticism. And here, by the way, is a good illustration of the destructive nature of that principle, which installs human reason, alias human lust and passion, into the chair of judgment, on what the scriptures may and may not be allowed to have taught. The preachers for a while labored, with all their might, from a dishonored and dethroned bible, to prove that unrestricted concubinage was not lawful, and failed, of course. The king then

summoned them into court, before the twelve elders, and took off his cloak and threw it upon the ground, and threw the bible upon it, and declared, that he had received a revelation from heaven, above the scriptures, and threatened all with the tokens of vengeance from God, who should make the least resistance to it. The preachers, of course, came into his views; and having made, as we have seen, the bible to be a mere nose of wax, taking any shape they chose to have it, they preached up the king's new doctrine for three days in succession, with as much zeal as they before preached it down. They boldly asserted the lawfulness, and even the duty, of having more than one wife. It was blasphemously asserted to be one of the privileges which God had conferred. When the public ear had become accustomed to this licentious doctrine, and the passions inflamed with the prospect of unbounded indulgence, Buckold set the example by taking three wives at once. After that, he took others, till he reached the number of fourteen. Now licentiousness was cried up as a distinguished virtue. Not to use the so called christian liberty, was deemed a crime. Persons were appointed on vigilance committees, to search all the houses in the city, for marriageable women, to be brought into the lists of the new kind of matrimony. The previous expulsion of men from the city, had caused the number of women to preponderate; and how many were attracted from abroad, by the new order of things,

does not appear. No woman of marriageable condition was allowed to live single; and none over twelve years of age actually did. Some men had two; some six, and even eight wives; and the liberty of divorce was as ample as that of marriage. Every excess was committed, of which human passion is capable. Law and decency had ceased to restrain. Strong fanatical susceptibilities are usually accompanied with strong developments of sensual lust; and here fanaticism had erected its authority over that of scripture, and so set aside one principle of the divine law after another, till the whole was repealed. The rush of impetuous passion prostrated at once the authority of God, and the rights of man. Willing or unwilling, all submitted to the tyranny of lust. Thus was fulfilled the divine word, While they promise liberty, they themselves are the slaves of corruption. There was a woman in the city, from Amsterdam, by the name of Aleida Lysting, who had left her husband, a man in affluent circumstances, and gone off to this sect of wild men. She was now importuned for a long time to take a new husband, and resisted; but finally she was forcibly compelled to marry Peter Simon, a Frieslander—resisting to the last. Thus voluptuousness was engrafted upon a blasphemous pretence of religion, and dissolute riot accompanied the austerities of fanatical devotion; and the city became a little hell upon earth.

But there was one hopeful feature, though it was

soon obliterated. Some showed signs of discontent, at this horrid state of things; enough to exhibit some twinges of public conscience. A meeting was called in the market place, and Cnipperdoling and all the teachers were seized. But when the populace heard of it, they seized their arms, rushed to deliver the prisoners, and killed about fifty in a most cruel and savage manner. They lashed them to trees and posts, and pierced them with spears: the prophets exclaiming that he was most acceptable to God, who struck the first blow.

Buckold, as a prophet, had exercised the reality of despotic power. But he wanted also the name and outward pomp of a king; so he called before him the judges, and thus addressed them: "Thus saith the Lord, O judges, as of old I appointed Saul to reign in Israel, and next after him David, taken from the keeping of sheep, so now I appoint my prophet, John Buckold, king in Zion." The judges hesitated to receive the oracle, and wanted time for consultation. Buckold proceeded: "Though I am called of God to the highest place, I would rather be a swineherd or an ostler. But against my will I have been compelled to take the throne of Zion." He then commanded the judges to lay down their office, and salute him as king. The judges, though they took their office from him, now appealed to the will of the people. But the would-be king had provided an instrument to adjust the will of the people to his purposes. He had secretly

arranged it with John Twiscoseurrer, a goldsmith; and he, the goldsmith, now stepped forth before the judges, claiming to speak by inspiration, and commanded them to call the whole people together, for he had a word of God to deliver. The people assembled, and he said: "Hear, O Israel, thus saith the Lord God, I will abolish the authority of the judges, and cause bishop and preacher to vacate their office, and put others in their place. You shall appoint for me twelve men, unsophisticated by learning, men who cannot read, and command them to rehearse my word to the people, word for word, and then, relying upon my spirit, let them expound without notes or reading, and I will pour out upon them a spirit of wisdom and understanding." Here was an early and bold beginning of that warfare, which fanatics have ever waged against "book learning," and the use of notes in preaching; and a precedent well worthy to be quoted, by all who now carry on that warfare.

Then the new prophet turned to Buckold, and gave him a drawn sword, in the presence of the people, and said: "To thee, Buckold, the Father commits this sword, that you may reign first in Zion, and spread your empire through the world, and bring all men under your sceptre." He then admonished the people, in all things to obey the king. Then the people with one voice raised a shout, and hailed him as their king. He was then conducted forth, under an escort of preachers, into St. Lambert's cemetery, to



be inaugurated. Here he appointed his councilors and ministers, and a body guard, to attend him whenever he went forth in state. Elsa Gewandtscheider, the widow of Matthias, whom he had married, was elevated above the rest of his wives, to the place of queen, and was privileged to ride forth in state with him. He had twenty-one horses, covered with gilded trappings and harness, and he rode forth in robes of gold and silver; and his queen had equal splendor of dress. Two young men rode one on each side of him; the one upon the left bore a sword ornamented with gold and gems, and the other a bible, on which rested a splendid crown. One of these was the son of the bishop, who had been taken prisoner in a skirmish, and brought into the city, and made chamberlain to the king. The king also wore upon his head another crown, made of the purest gold and richest gems, and a chain and necklace of gold, set with gems. And then a globe of entire gold, representing the earth; and this globe, pierced with two swords, one of gold and another of silver, crossing each other, and on the top a golden cross with this inscription, "King of the righteousness of this world," was carried in his train. Three times a week this magnificent pageant was exhibited, and led out to the market place, where was a throne covered with a cloth of gold.

Here, seated on this throne, were brought before him petitions and complaints, chiefly respecting mar-

riage and divorce, now the principal business of the city. It happened, on one of these occasions, while the people were standing round in a dense crowd, that Cnipperdoling leaped forth upon his hands and feet, and creeping through the crowd, ran to a high place which overlooked the assembly ; and said to this and that person, "The Father has sanctified thee to receive the Holy Ghost." On another day he led out a dance before the king, with a song, mingling lasciviousness and blasphemy that is incapable of being repeated. The king indulged his humor for a time ; and then, feeling that the inspirations of the prophet somewhat interfered with the majesty of the king, he desired him to desist, but in vain. Then the king retired in disgust, and the prophet ascended the vacant throne. But soon the king sent and imprisoned him for three days. How majesty and inspiration got reconciled again, we are not informed, except as subsequent history shows them in co-operation again.

During this time, the siege pressed hard upon the city, and the people's drooping faith required new stimulants. So the prophets published a book, called the Restitution. In this they maintained, that Christ is to have a personal reign on the earth, before the last judgment ; that all the righteous are to rise from the dead, and reign with him, and the wicked are to be destroyed ; that it is lawful for the people to annihilate existing governments ; that though the apostles

were not allowed to exercise temporal power, yet now the ministers of the church ought to take the sword, and by force re-construct the whole civil organization of the world; that no one who is not a christian, ought to be tolerated in the church, or allowed to live; that all property must be held in common, and no one be allowed to hold private property; that marriage of unbelievers is void and impure, worse than adultery; that Luther and the pope were false prophets, and Luther the worst of the two.

A few weeks after this, while the king was sitting in state, Twiscoscurre said to him, "King John, it is your duty now to renew the gospel. Thus saith the Lord God, Go and tell the king of Zion to prepare a supper in the cemetery of the cathedral, and there let teachers of my word be appointed, for the four quarters of the world, to teach all men the way of righteousness, and compel them to come to my fold, by the spirit of their mouth." A supper was forthwith prepared, and to it were collected all, without distinction of age or sex, to the number of forty-two hundred. The king, queen, and their train of servants, served as table waiters. After the supper was finished, the king took bread, and distributed to all the people, saying, "Take, eat, and show the death of your Lord;" and the queen took wine, and distributed it after the same manner. Then he called upon all the assembly to say, whether each one of them was willing to perform the will of God, be it what it will, and

prepared to suffer and die, if need be, for the faith? And all, with one voice, answered yea. Then the prophet, Twiscoscurre, stepped forward, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, "Choose, out of my people, men to go into the four quarters of the earth, and perform the wonders which I am to show to the heathen; and he that will not obey their command, let him die." Then he took from his pocket and read off a list of the names of those destined to the mission, embracing his own name with the rest. The king admonished them that they must leave all, and go forth in faith, and teach the gospel, and not shrink nor recant their doctrine, for fear of sword or flames. It appears from what follows, that it was expected, if not desired, that these men should die in their perilous undertaking. Twenty-six were appointed to this mission, and a purse of gold was given to each. Afterwards, the appointed missionaries were collected to a farewell repast with the king and queen. While at supper, the king rose, and said that he had a matter of business, which God had committed to him. He went out and seized a soldier from the ranks, accused him of being a traitor, convicted him by miraculous inspiration, and took off his head at once—being himself witness, judge, jury, and executioner. Then he returned to supper, and coolly related what he had done, as a common occurrence. The missionaries were sent out in four companies, proceeding from the four opposite gates of the city, and going to the four

quarters of the world. They went forth, proclaiming, "Behold, the day of God's mercy is brief; the axe is laid at the root of the tree. If you reject the peace now offered, your doom is sealed." By these bellowings, they drew upon them the wonder of the people; and when seized by magistrates and brought into court, they threw their cloaks upon the ground, and their purses of gold upon their cloaks, and said, "The Father sends us here, to offer you the gospel. In token of your reception of it, you must bring all your property into common stock. But if you refuse, we by this token call God to witness, that you have spurned his peace. The time has now come, that was spoken of by all the prophets, when God will require righteousness in the earth." When questioned of their faith, life, &c., they professed a willingness to seal their testimony with their blood. They affirmed, that the pure word of God had not been preached, nor had righteousness existed in the earth, since the days of the apostles. When asked why they thrust out innocent men from their city, plundering their property, and violating their wives and children, and that in violation of their plighted faith, they answered, that the time has come for the meek to inherit the earth, and God had given them this wealth, as he of old gave the wealth of Egypt to Israel. They said that reinforcements were coming in from Friesland and Holland; and when they should come, the king would go out and subject all the world

to himself, and destroy all the wicked. This was the general tenor of their preaching and dealing with the people; and, as might have been expected, they all, with one exception, were put to death.

That exception was Hilversum, whose cunning was superior to his zeal for martyrdom, in such a cause. He, with others, had been arrested and turned over to the keeping and disposal of the bishop; and having effected with the bishop a secret arrangement, the nature of which will hereafter be seen, he was set at liberty; and in pursuance of the secret arrangement, he went direct back into Munster. When he arrived, the king called him to account, and reproved him sharply, for coming back alive; asked him how it was, that when all his co-laborers had sealed their testimony with their blood, he should have returned alive, when he knew that it was a capital offence for him to do it. He replied, that by a signal interposition of Providence, he had been spared to bring him glorious tidings. "But yesterday," says he, "I sat doomed to die. But an angel delivered me, and bade me come and tell you that three wealthy cities, Amsterdam, Daventry, and Wessalia, had been given in the purpose of God to you, and that you will soon have possession of them, if you will send prophets thither." Now the most wonderful part of this history is, that these arrant impostors could at the same time be the dupes of imposture; showing, that there is in the nature of the human mind, and in

God's government over mind, a close connection between deceiving, and being deceived. They that practise delusions are punished by being suffered to be deluded. At any rate, in this case the king greedily devoured the joyful report. He took Hilversum into his family as a special friend, and gave him a gold ring and a robe of honor; and he appointed James Campense, bishop of Amsterdam, and sent him thither to take possession; and he sent other messengers to the other places, who employed themselves in concocting seditions.

The city had become reduced to great straits, by reason of the siege. Many fled and offered themselves willingly to the enemy, not so much hoping for pardon, as to escape a calamity which was worse than a violent death. Many went out, creeping upon their hands and knees, not having strength to walk erect; the greater part of whom perished by the way. But no hope of deliverance appeared; several small bodies had started from the neighboring provinces, to come to their relief, but had been cut off, and others had been discouraged from like attempts; and all Germany was ready to concentrate its force upon them. But so powerful was the fascination of Buckold's enthusiasm over the multitude, that their hopes were sanguine as ever. But the faith of some failed them, when famine was making such inroads upon them. A plot was conceived, to take the king by force, and deliver him up to the bishop's army; but it was detected, and



its authors punished with death. And now, in order to guard against future conspiracies, the king selected the twelve men of the most influence with the multitude, and made each of the twelve a duke of some country yet to be conquered, and assigned him a castle for his ducal residence. With such castles in the air, he fancied that he had confirmed his authority over his people, dying with famine.

While the fame of the Munsterians had spread among the anabaptists, throughout Holland and Friesland, many companies of them, as we have already remarked, collected here and there to bring succor to the besieged. The king sent a messenger, John Geles, into those countries, accompanied with two others, with vast sums of money. He appointed him commander of the forces to be raised, and instructed him to proclaim among his friends, that God, by his prophet, Henry Hilversum, had promised to subject to him the three powerful cities of Amsterdam, Darentry, and Wessalia; and these things would be realized at once, if they would bring the needed supplies to Munster. He left the city about the middle of January, 1535, at which time, provisions in the city began to fail. Food was now given to the people by weight, and the daily allowance was from day to day diminished. At length they were reduced from two meals to one, and had before them the speedy prospect of a perpetual fast.

All expectation was now fixed on the return of

Geles ; but for a long time nothing was heard of him ; and the king suspected that he had proved treacherous, and pocketed the money. Next, he made an arrangement with Hilversum, the prophet, that he should go, little knowing the occasions which his prophet had for such a journey. He fitted him off with a generous purse of gold, to go to Friesland and Holland, and gave him John Nottle for a companion of his journey. But as soon as they left the city, Hilversum went straight to the bishop, and left Nottle to take his journey to Daventry. But Nottle in a few days returned to Munster, and told the king his misfortunes, and the treachery of Hilversum. The whole city were thunderstruck. They were amazed to see themselves betrayed by their prophets, in whom from the beginning they had placed all confidence ; and they began now to despair and prepare for the worst. Nor were their minds at all soothed by a letter, which at this time they received from Hilversum, their departed prophet. Snugly located in the bishop's quarters, he sent them a letter in these words :

“ Lest it should seem strange to you, citizens, and unwarranted and unchristian in me, that I have taken money for the purpose of collecting an army, and then have fled to the bishop, I must inform you, that when I discovered that I was in error, and that you were madmen, I gladly seized the occasion, providentially offered, to make my escape. For who that is in his right mind, can endure to live among a people,

where nothing is done except from some delirious impulse ; where is no law or order ; where every swine-herd or horse-jockey, may be a prophet, if he will ? [This, by the way, is a good description of that paradise to which our enemies of law and order are aspiring.] Where one must be under the power of an impudent buffoon, who has seized the reins of tyranny, by impious imposture ; and where the dreams and fictions of a lying scoundrel, are received as prophecies ? Who can desire life among a rabble, that obey no law, human or divine—not even the law of nature, but rather the customs of herds of beasts ? If any one wishes to bring your words and deeds to the test of scripture, he is seized and put to death. I therefore dismiss the horrid errors of an abominable sect, which minds steeped in fanaticism cannot detect, but which one truly enlightened spurns as the tricks of false prophets. John Matthias, whose wicked administration was more tolerable, first paved the way for your destruction. Then Buckold, a sottish fellow, full of phrenzies, has ruined you by his impostures. Lately you have begun to come to your senses ; but, O, too late. For you are now held in chains, by a secret conspiracy, to defend the cursed enterprises of a madman. You should have used your wits in season to detect the goldsmith's impostures, and not received this man as your king. I confess, that when I, the only survivor of the twenty-six, escaped from the walls of Munster, I gave assurance that I would re-

turn. For I had lived so long among you, as to have imbibed some of your bad principles and morals, as well as to be able to see the end of your insanity. And I, in order so to conceal my purpose, as to escape in safety, invented the prophecy respecting the three cities. Buckold was a false prophet, and a cursed impostor from the beginning ; and all his plans have had the effect to keep you blindfolded, and shut you up in these walls, as beasts reserved for slaughter.”

This letter was read by the people, and produced a deep impression. A great murmur arose among them. The famine advanced, with no hope of relief. The minds of the people were kept from outbreaks by tyranny. But now evident signs of mutiny appeared. Men collected in groups, here and there, through the city, uttering complaints. But despairing of help from God or man, they had resolution to attempt nothing. A messenger went to the king, and informed him of what was passing ; and he came out and summoned a public meeting, and thus addressed them :

“Fellow citizens, regenerated by a renewed baptism, I did not think that you would be so fickle, as to be driven about by every breeze, and so impatient of labor or danger. For I have always forewarned you, that severe experience must in this enterprise be expected, and borne with firmness ; and I had hoped, that ye would follow the example of Paul, who, tossed about with various calamities, and ex-

periencing hunger, nakedness, cold, and heat, kept the great object of his life in view. That was an example of christian fortitude, which we ought ever to keep in our eye. For he who will refuse to die any death in our cause, is not fit to have a name among us. How often have you professed, with one heart and voice, your willingness to die for righteousness sake, preferring death to life—yea, that if you had liberty to go in peace, you had rather stay and die. Whence, then, this fickleness? If you now wish, that you had remained in your former wicked course, and had never joined us, you should have better counted the cost. But now, after having been baptised, what madness has seized your minds? Christ says, He that puts his hand to the plough, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.

But you say, that it is better to die at once, than to die every day, by a lingering famine. Place not your safety in man; but fix your last hope upon God our shield, who now stands ready in the lofty skies, to fight for us. If God will not let a raven starve, he will not let you perish by famine. These discontents, fellow citizens, I know, did not originate in your own minds, but from the impulse of the devil, and Henry Hilversum, his disciple, a bad egg of a bird of ill omen; a renegade prophet, endeavoring to seduce you from righteousness to paganism. I know him well. I invited him into my family; though I always had suspicions, that he would change the skin of

the fox for that of the lion. But let not his treachery nor impious writings frighten you. He was a false prophet, and never spoke by inspiration, as the event has shown. Keep up your courage, then. We have in Holland and Friesland, a goodly number of confederates, from whom, unless the spirit of God deceives me, we shall yet receive sufficient supplies and reinforcements."

Such was the substance of Buckold's harangue. Unsatisfying as it was to reason, in such circumstances, it was enough for fanaticism, and had the effect to quiet the tumult.

In the latter part of December, a summons had been sent into the city from the army, warning the people to surrender, and threatening to bring the whole force of the empire against them if they did not. In the beginning of the next month, January, 1535, the city returned an answer, defending and glorying in their design, but saying nothing of their having appointed a king for the whole world. But in a letter to the landgrave, of whom they indulged some hopes, they spoke freely of killing off all the wicked, freeing all slaves, &c. With this letter they sent him their book, upon "Restitution," and warned him, not, like the wicked princes, to wage war with the innocent. The landgrave read the letter and the book, and gave it to his pastors to answer. He replied to their letter at length, blaming them for not proving by miracles their supernatural pretensions; informing

them that their demand to have their cause tried according to law, was preposterous, since they had taken the sword, and trodden down the laws; yea, that their pretence of wishing for trial, was false and feigned. He complained that he had sent them faithful pastors, but they had cast them out, trod down the government, plundered the property, practised polygamy and all uncleanness, and set up a new king. When they had received this answer, they replied, and sent another book, "upon the mysteries of scripture." In this they divide the course of the world into three periods; that from Adam to Noah, the people of which perished in the flood; that in which we now live, which is to end in being burned up, when anti-Christ is put down; and the third period opens: then the throne of David will be set up, and Christ will reign upon the earth, and all the prophecies be fulfilled.

In the month of February, while the famine in the besieged city was severe, one of the king's wives, pitying the hard lot of the people, happened to say to the others, that she did not believe that it was God's will, that poor men should be consumed after that manner. The king, having a plenty of provisons, laid up for himself, and even indulging in luxury, was stung with indignation, and dragged her forth into the market place; and in presence of his other wives, commanded her to kneel, and took off her head at once. Over her dead body he reproached her as



a harlot ; and his other wives danced with frantic joy around the corpse, giving blasphemous thanks to God ; and the multitude, who had nothing but a short allowance of bread and salt, were made to join the dance. Easter came, and no hope of deliverance. The king had exhausted the force of magnificent promises to keep up the courage of the people. And now he feigned himself sick for three days ; and then he came out into the market place, and said, that he had promised them deliverance ; but that his promises must be understood of a spiritual freedom ; and that that freedom they had already attained. For he had had a vision from heaven, in which he seemed to himself to be sitting on a blind ass, and God laid upon him the sins of the whole multitude ; and these he bore away and took them from them ; and now they were free from all sin. And sure enough, these miserable men were blind asses, upon whom this demoniac sat ; and the desperate villain had upon him a heavy burden of sins, but not at all for the relief of his victims.

But the siege went on, and the famine increased ; many were dying daily ; many left the city, the soldiers suffering them to pass, seeing they were too much exhausted to be other than objects of pity. The besiegers notified the city, that if they would deliver up their king, and a few others, they should go unharmed. This they ardently desired. But such a vigilance was kept over them, that they dared to attempt nothing. The besiegers then forbade any

more coming out of the city, even women or children. The next day they sent out an answer, written under the direction of their king, complaining that they were not allowed a lawful trial; interpreting certain passages in Daniel, and saying that the fourth beast is the most cruel of all; that they shall send no more letters, but persevere in the truth.

Affairs had now come to a crisis; something must be done, or all must die. It so happened, that there was in the city a soldier, by the name of John Longstreet, who had deserted from the bishop's army, being under sentence for some crime; and since his desertion, he had adhered to the fortunes of the anabaptists, through all their discouragements. But now, seeing the desperate condition of all things, and the sure destruction coming upon the city, he determined upon a bold adventure. He carefully examined the fortifications of the city, and found the weakest spot in them; took measures of a bridge needed to be made over the trench, and of the needful scaling ladders, and then sought out a fit companion to desert with him. And these two watched their opportunity by night, and let themselves down the wall by a rope, and went over to the bishop's army. Longstreet kept back at first, till he saw that the other was kindly received, and then he also came up and surrendered. The bishop was astonished at the boldness of the fugitive, in that he surrendered while under sentence of death; but when he began to make inquiries respect-

ing the state of the city, Longstreet first stipulated for the preservation of his life, and then he revealed the whole; and said that with one regiment, he could easily capture the city; that they needed only a bridge, and a few scaling ladders, and that the thing should be done at once, before it was known in the city that he was gone. The bishop at once selected chosen men to go upon the expedition. By that gate of the city which was called the Gate of the Cross, the trench was not more than twelve feet wide; and here also was a little gate, which was almost always open. Having made a bridge adapted to the width of the trench, they brought it in the first watch of the night; and Longstreet swam across with a rope, and drew the bridge across; and over it thirty-five men passed at once. Having passed the trench, they next scaled the wall, with ladders. Then within the wall were palisades, which they passed by removing some poles. They were able to do all this without notice of the watch; for there was a violent storm, and the watch, not dreaming of danger at such a time, were asleep. So they effected their entrance into the city, and killed the watch, without exciting alarm. Then they opened the gate for the entrance of the soldiers without. And when about three hundred had entered, their bridge broke, but others continued to follow, by swimming across the trench, till about six hundred had found an entrance. Now in their eagerness to rush in, they neglected to guard the gate, and

some of the men of the city slipped in behind, and shut the gate, shutting out the remainder of the army. But those who had entered, aided by the darkness of the night, marched everywhere through the city, to make it appear that their numbers were greater than they were; otherwise they would have been more effectually assailed. But it was a time of anxious and thrilling suspense, for those without. They suspected that those within were the victims of a plot, having been decoyed in, by such means, to be butchered. They heard the sound of shouting, and, as they thought, of psalm-singing, and supposed it was the shout of victory over their butchered companions. For hour after hour, they stood in this breathless anxiety and suspense, till six o'clock in the morning, when a signal was given from the walls, that another gate was open for them. And now the whole detachment entered; and as daylight revealed the position of things, they found the men of the city, in a mass, in the market place, fortified by wagons and carriages, and the streets leading thither barricaded. These, though they might have maintained resistance for a while, demanded quarter, and their surrender was accepted. But before it was carried into effect, they commenced battle again, and so a contest ensued, in which most of them were slain.

The king, at the noise of the first tumult, threw himself upon the bed. But when it was told him, that the enemy had got possession of the city, he

armed himself, and, with a few of his friends, went to the cemetery of St. Lambert, determined there to defend himself to the last; and hither came the whole force of the enemy; and his attendants were soon slain; and he and Crechting and Cuipperdoling were taken prisoners. Rothman, before this, had run upon the thickest of the enemy, preferring immediate death to what he had to expect if taken alive. Some of the king's wives were taken, and some escaped. Whether his queen was slain in the tumult, or whether she escaped, is not known. The bishop marched his whole army into the city, searching all the houses, cellars, and chimneys, for anabaptists, concealed; and they preserved the women alive; but the men who were anabaptists, were, with a few exceptions, either killed or driven from the city, and their property confiscated. The soldiers, in many instances, violated the women: and in doing it, many of the soldiers were killed. For the women, to revenge their wrongs, applied poison and other violent means. So that many soldiers were found dead in the beds; and this provoked the soldiers to greater cruelties towards the women. The king and his fellow prisoners were sent to a castle, about four miles from the city; and in mockery of his royalty, the soldiers tied him to a horse's tail, and put spurs to the horse, and in that plight, conducted him to his prison.

The king and his companions, instead of being immediately punished, were carried about from place

to place, as a public spectacle. They being brought into the landgrave's territories, the landgrave engaged one of his chaplains, in a discussion with him, touching his peculiar doctrines. Here, with seeming reluctance, after disputing awhile, he yielded one after another of his principles, apparently in expectation of saving his life. He even went so far, as to promise, on condition of release, that he would secure the submission of all anabaptists, throughout Holland, Brabant, Friesland, and England. The bishop asked him on what authority he had assumed such power in the city? and he answered, by asking the bishop who had given him *his* authority, over the city? The bishop answered, the will of the people. The king said that he took his authority from the will of God. After awhile, the prisoners were taken back to the city of Munster, for punishment. Many admonitions were given them to prepare for eternity. The king professed repentance. The others confessed nothing. The barbarism of the times was exemplified in the mode of their execution. They were chained to a stake, and their flesh torn with red-hot pincers. After enduring this agony for an hour, a dagger in the breast put an end to their misery. Their bodies were then inclosed in an iron casement, and hung to the top of the tower of St. Lambert.

The citizens who had been driven from the city by the anabaptists, were, as far as possible, restored to their former possessions. The new fortifications were

demolished; and the bishop demolished a castle that he had built himself. The city had been so fortified, that it could be defended by a few; and then it had within itself the means of subsistence for a considerable number. It embraced within its walls, much open and cultivated grounds, and pasture lands; and it had a river running through, in which fish were taken; and at the time when the city was taken, many garden vegetables were coming to maturity; and in the king's cellar were found no small quantities of wine and beer and provisions, by which he might for a long time have sustained persons enough to defend the city. Immense quantities of money were also found. The plunder was distributed; the bishop took a part, and the soldiers shared a part. The crown and other golden trappings of royalty, were given to the bishop.

This history is instructive, as it shows the result of one out of the thousand experiments which have been made of the community of goods, and the leveling system. Those dreamers, like their successors in modern days, expected to rear a new paradise on earth, in the carrying out of their notions of equality. If they could only bring down the pride of the rich, and arrest the sword from the powerful, and abolish all these odious distinctions in society, what a free and happy community they would make! Well, divine providence, excellent in council and wonderful in working, determined to show the folly of their warfare against



divine institutions, and providential arrangements, by letting them make the experiment. They took the city of Munster, so fortified as to insure them existence for a sufficient time to carry out their principles ; and so enriched with the plunder of the wealthy, that they wanted not the means of doing as they would. And what was the result ? The freedom which the system so largely promised, by the operation of laws of nature, infallible as those which give us day and night, degenerated at once into the most galling tyranny, where every person was a slave ; and none was sure of keeping his head upon his shoulders for an hour.

One historian, who was connected with the bishop's army, through that siege, and who writes what his own eyes saw, speaking of the state of society in the city, aptly calls it a leonine society, in allusion to Æsop's fable of the lion, which is, that " The lion had entered into the community system, with a sheep and some other animals, and having, as the product of their labor in hunting, taken a deer, they came to a division of the product. A part was set off for each. Then says the lion, I claim one part, because I am the most worthy ; and one, because I am the most brave ; and then because my labor was most effectual to the obtaining it, I claim the third ; and if you do not yield me the fourth, there will be an end of our friendship. At this the others went away empty and silent, choosing not to contend with the lion." Now

make the king of the Munster community the lion, and you have the fiction of the fable made a matter of fact. You see the common people, who had been caught in his snare, baited with the shining epithets of liberty and equality, and expecting an earthly paradise—perishing with hunger, while the king was rioting in luxury, with an abundance in his stores for the future. Some may say, that the system did not have a fair trial, because the equality and liberty were frustrated by the usurpation of tyrants. True; but that very fact is an example, that all such dreams of equality are visionary. The radical defect of the theory is, that men are depraved, selfish, and unequal in capacity; and, if you please, tyrants by nature; and if you bring them to the platform of equality, they will not remain, and cannot be kept there, unless their level be that of slavery and poverty. If there were no lions among the sheep, they might have a more equal distribution. But as God has not made men in mind and disposition and talents equal; and as he does not observe a law of equality in appointing the experience of individuals; and as human depravity will ever make men in this world unfit to be put in a society of angels, the experiment of the leveling system is sure to fail, as often as it is made. And those who through such revolutions seek a higher liberty and a higher degree of affluence, will find themselves, as all their predecessors have, involved in deeper poverty and servitude.

From the scenes here described, we gather a good definition of fanaticism. We have seen these frantic men, driven hither and thither, by the blind impulse of a fanatical spirit; and as we mark their progress from one step to another, we find them clothing their own wishes and purposes, with the power of divine sanctions. As soon as a new project is formed, it is at once set forth, as a revelation from heaven, a thing which God requires. And this, if we mistake not, enters into the very elements and genius of fanaticism. It is the nature of fanaticism, to clothe the lusts and depraved passions of the human mind, with the sanctions of God's law; yea, to install lust upon the throne of conscience, and make it reign, as if by divine right, commanding the powers of heaven and hell to enforce its edicts. This is fanaticism; and when you find a fanatic, you find one rioting in some lust of body or mind, under pretence that God requires it of him. And herein lies the superlative wickedness of the thing. It is bad enough to array upon the side of their rebellion, all the force of divine sanctions; and thus invert the batteries of heaven, set for the defence of truth and righteousness, in upon the very citadel of God's authority.

What a comment have we here, upon the notion, that it is no matter what a man believes, provided he act according to his belief. Did not those Munsterians act according to their belief? Were they not sincere? And yet what was the fruit of their acting

according to their belief? And will not God hold them, and all such destructive men to an account, for their belief, and for its fruits? And do not these facts concur, with a world of like illustrations, to sustain the principle that belief is the prime element of character, good and bad; and he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned?

## CHAPTER VIII.

In our last chapter, we rehearsed the shocking scenes, generated by the follies of this sect, in the city of Munster. After such an issue had of the prevalence of such doctrines, it is natural to expect, that the anabaptists in all parts of the world, ashamed and disgusted with their own principles, would throw them off, and embrace the truth. But that is not the way of fanatics. Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. But they will increase to more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth the canker. Fanaticism is a disease of mind, over which truth and reason, enforced by sad experience, has as little power as it has over a person whose reason is dethroned in delirium. We have in the case of our Millerites an example. The life of their system was staked on the event of the world's ending at such a time. But the event falsified their whole theory; and yet, for the most part, they cling to it, with as much tenacity as ever.

Yet such practical exposures indirectly tend to cure the mischief. Though the fanatics themselves are not benefited, the world is benefited, and others are prevented from taking the disease. While those awful scenes were in progress, Luther referred to them in a sermon, and made these remarks upon them, which are worth rehearsing in this connection. He said: "How should we lament and deplore the case of those lost men! The thing speaks for itself; devils dwell among them in troops. Yet it becomes us to recognize the boundless mercy of God. For though Germany deserves all this grievous affliction, for her contempt of the gospel, her blasphemies, and shedding the blood of pious men, He yet restrains the violence of satan, and holds him with a close rein, and mercifully admonishes us by this (by no means fictitious) tragedy at Munster, and calls us to amend our lives. For though God holds him in check, I doubt not but this cunning and subtle spirit is to proceed much farther. But now God throws hindrances in his way, so that he is not doing as much as he desires. But he does as much as he is permitted. For if the evil spirit expected to overturn the christian faith, he would not go this way to work, and do such a thing as to introduce polygamy and licentiousness, since the baseness of the thing is manifest and abhorrent to all. The peace of the commonwealth may be disturbed by it; but the kingdom of Christ must be assailed by other weapons. If he will

seduce men into snares, he must not act the tyrant. For this all condemn, and all see whither his designs are tending. But he must come to his object through some hidden paths. To wear obsolete and grotesque garments, to put on austerity of countenance, to bow down the head like a bulrush, to abstain from eating flesh, and reject the use of money, and the marriage institution, to rail against the authority of magistrates, and profess remarkable humility; these, indeed, are the way to circumvent the wise, and pave the way to establish by stealth authority over men. But this sheer impudence of claiming dominion, and gratifying lust, is not the policy of a cunning, but of a raw and unpractised demon; or if he be a cunning one, God doubtless puts restraints upon him, that he cannot plot more skillfully. He suffers him thus far, to excite us to the fear of God, and leads us to repentance, before he gives him a loose rein, to attack us more fiercely. For if a mere smatterer of a devil can raise such a disturbance, what will it be, when satan shall come against us with all his force and cunning, in the person of some skillful theologian? Nothing is to be feared from this graceless spirit. Yea, not all in the city of Munster itself approve this tragedy. But many bewail it, and with groans and tears await the day of their deliverance, as in former years in the sedition of the peasantry.

“But I would, that there were no devil in the world more cunning than that of Munster, provided the



word of God be not taken from us. Yea, I believe very few can have faith in such a foolish, drunken master; though when the anger of God is kindled, there is no error so absurd, that satan cannot cause it to be swallowed—as in the case of the Mahomedans. For their doctrine, foolish as it was, after the light of God's word was put out, took to itself power, and went abroad, far and wide. And we should have seen the same in Germany, if God had not crushed the conspiracy of Muncer. For if God permits, satan will raise the smallest spark, to a boundless flame; and there is no better way of putting out his fires, than by the word of God. Though every spiritual enemy seems to be taking arms against us, we cannot vanquish such enemies with horsemen or artillery. But our princes and bishops hinder the word of God, the only effectual means of resisting such enemies, and then apply punishments to deliver the body from the devil, but leave the heart and soul in his power. It is with them as with the jews of old, who wished to annihilate Christ, by the death of the cross.

“And now as to what the Munsterians have published. The fact of their publishing such stuff, is a full proof of their madness. They teach absurdity respecting Christ; that he was not born of Mary, and yet that he was the seed of David. Then they condemn the baptism of former times with an ill grace; for they declare this baptism not an institution of God, but the mere work of men. But if we ought to

throw away everything that has passed through the hands of wicked men, why do they not throw away the gold and silver, and all the property which they have plundered from others. For as these are the creatures of God, so is baptism. When a wicked man swears, he abuses the name of God. But if there were no God, and that name not a true name, it were not a sin to swear. He who robs, steals, and plunders, violates the command of God. But he would not sin if there were no such command of God. So if the former baptism be a nullity, they who have received it have not sinned by it. Why then do they execrate this baptism as impious, when in the same breath they call it a nullity? If the marriages of the former ages are, as they say, all whoredom, because between those in a state of unbelief, then do they not declare themselves to be the children of whoredoms? And if they be indeed illegitimates, why do they receive the inheritance of their fathers, to which they have no title? Men so holy and religious, ought not to live on the fruits of whoredom, nor to take the property of others by robbery. As it respects their ridiculous kingdom, there is so much of open wickedness connected with it, that it speaks for itself." Such were the views taken by Luther, while the scenes were passing.

But notwithstanding the horrid fruits of anabaptism at Munster, and the exemplary punishments inflicted, the zeal and courage of the sect in the low countries

were not broken; and though many professed to condemn the extravagances of the Munsterians, the principal teachers of the sect generally continued to acknowledge the authority of the Munster prophets. Menno Simonis, the father of the Mennonite branch of the sect, though he condemned many things in the Munsterians, yet acknowledged them as brethren, and maintained that their acts of violence and murder were no proof that they were not accepted of God.

But the time would fail, to go into the details of the ravages made by these fanatics, in Friesland and Holland; of what commotions it excited, especially at Amsterdam, and at Leyden, and throughout Batavia; what nefarious plots it formed for the destruction of cities. I will here only give a few specimens. While the tragedies in Munster were in progress, the anabaptists in other cities, and in all the surrounding countries, were not only in intimate sympathy with them, and desiring to send assistance to their brethren there, but were busy in forming and executing schemes and plots, for the acquisition of power. At one time, a great collection of anabaptists assembled, from all parts of Holland, having left their wives and children and all, except what ready money they had, and embarked on board a fleet of twelve ships. When asked whither they were going, they answered, that they were going to a country which God would show them. The fleet was detained by order of the government. The next day, five of these anabaptists, at

mid-day, stripped themselves to perfect nakedness, and ran through the streets of Amsterdam, with drawn swords. Like so many madmen, they ran hither and thither, uttering things too horrid to repeat. But they failed in that way to make proselytes. For the people, astonished at the strange spectacle, stood and wondered. A company of lancers was called out, and commanded to be in readiness to quell a tumult; the ringleaders were arrested, and the commotion ceased. Six of the authors of the disturbance were punished with death, the same day. A few days after, two more, by decree of the senate were beheaded, at Amsterdam; and at Harlæm four men were burnt to death, and two women were drowned.

In another instance, a conspiracy was formed throughout Holland, for burning the city of Leyden. The conspiracy was discovered in season to arrest it, but the city was thrown into terrible consternation. The plot had even begun to be executed. Fires had been kindled, at the same moment, in several places. But the people were organized for action. They searched every house in the city, and found the headquarters of the incendiaries, and made prisoners of fifteen men and five women, who were speedily punished with death.

Another instance was after this sort. The wife of a citizen, who had gone to reside, for purposes of trade, in one of the Asiatic cities, in the meantime

kept a house in which she entertained a company of these fanatics, consisting of seven men and five women. One of them, a tailor, by the name of Theodorite, had called himself a prophet. Early one morning, before three o'clock, he having roused the company and taken them into a retired part of the house, threw himself down upon the floor, before them, and commenced praying; and in his prayer, he made such impressions on the sympathies and imaginations of the others, as to make them really believe, that the house was shaken, and all things around them were in a tremor. When he ceased, he said to one of the number, I have seen God in his majesty, and have conversed with him. I was taken into heaven, and thence to hell, and have seen everything there; and the great day of the last judgment is coming, and you are to be damned forever. You are even unfit to go to hell, but must descend into the bottomless pit. The minister so addressed had his fears powerfully wrought upon, and uttered an earnest prayer for mercy. The prophet then said, God has forgiven you all, and will receive you among his children. In another instance, he assembled his company again, and spent four hours in teaching them, and praying with them; then he took off from his head a helmet which he had put on, and an iron breastplate, and a sword, and other military accoutrements, and threw them into the fire. Then he stripped himself wholly naked. Then he commanded

the other six men to do the same, and they did it; and the women followed the example of the men, and left not so much as a thread, to bind the hair of their heads. For their fanaticism had overcome the modesty of nature. Now the prophet commanded that all their clothing be thrown upon the fire, as a whole burnt offering acceptable to God; which was no sooner said than done. And from burning so much woolen cloth, a horrible smell arose, filling the whole house; and the mistress of the house, who was ignorant of what was going on, awoke from her sleep, and supposing the house was in flames, sprang in, to extinguish the fire, and found these eleven persons naked before her, and their clothes consuming upon the fire. But before she had time to remonstrate, the prophet commanded her to do the same, and she obeyed. The prophet then commanded all to follow him, and imitate what he did. Then, after him, they all, men and women, rushed out into the street, and ran through the city, crying, "Woe, woe, woe! Divine vengeance! Divine vengeance!" Never, in the life of man, was heard a more horrible wailing. The citizens rushed to arms, and the military paraded in the market place, supposing that the city had been invested with a hostile army. The disturbers were all taken into custody, except one woman, who escaped. While they stood in court, garments were offered them, but they threw them away in contempt, boasting that they were naked truth. A detachment

of soldiers were required to be on duty. Many houses were searched; the churches were kept shut, to prevent an outbreak; and the city gates were allowed to be open but a short time, twice a day. This commotion attracted anabaptists from other places, to the number of a thousand. But by the prudent management of the government, they were dispersed. Some houses that were suspected were demolished; and the seven men who had distinguished themselves by their nakedness, were punished with death; one crying, "Praise the Lord forever;" another, "Avenge our blood;" another, "Open their eyes;" another, "Woe! woe!" A few days after, nine others were executed; and notwithstanding the shedding of so much blood, through all Holland, the sect became more and more obstinate in their errors.

Soon after, a tumult broke out in Bolswert, in Friesland. The anabaptists invaded an old monastery, and made it their head-quarters; and drove out the monks, and laid waste the whole interior of the building, and collected in force about three hundred. They set the government at defiance, demolished all churches, trampled the wafers, with which the catholics celebrated mass, under feet, saying, "These are the gods of the wicked;" and they took special pains to profane what others regarded as sacred. George Schenck was then prefect of Friesland, a man of distinguished virtue and military talent; and when he heard of the outbreak of the anabaptists, he



gathered his forces at once from city and country, and besieged them, before they had time to gather their whole strength. He then held a parley with them, and offered pardon, if each one would lay down his arms and return to his home. To foreigners he offered to grant safe conducts to return through his country to theirs. He offered these conditions to all, excepting ten, whom he reserved. To this they objected, and determined to live or die together. At the same time, they shot one of the attendants of the prefect. This made the Frieslanders more determined in their purpose. They now besiege the camp of the anabaptists more closely, and allow none to escape. Then they brought their engines and cannon to bear against the walls, with all their might; and four times they were with some loss of lives repulsed. At length a passage was made in the walls, and the anabaptists fled, and were pursued into subterranean passages, which they had dug out. Here the anabaptists, who had occupied the monastery all perished; some by being shot, some by being buried in the ruins—excepting sixty-two men and seventy women. On the part of Schenck, one hundred were missing. Some of the prisoners were punished, and the rest, more foolish than criminal, were dismissed.

Meanwhile, two anabaptists took the sword at Daventry. It was while the famine was pressing severely upon the besieged at Munster, and the scarcity of

bread had compelled the people to feed upon roots and herbs and leaves of the grape vine. Reduced to these extremities, many of the people by night escaped from the city. In this deplorable state of things, the king of Munster had an agent abroad, diligently serving his cause, by the name of John Geles. But being disappointed and unsuccessful in his plans, he began to form new enterprises. For after he came into Friesland, and thence into Holland, he obtained no supplies; yet, by a perverse industry, he contributed to the commotions in Friesland, which we have just related; and when these were allayed, and a greater commotion existed in Holland, he went to Amsterdam; and there he changed his name, and took the disguise of a merchant. Through the confessions of the prisoners taken in Friesland, revealing his connection with the anabaptist seditions there, his name, Geles, had become celebrated through the cities of Holland; and this now gave him an advantage to operate with those of his sect, while under his disguise. He held private interviews with such of them as he could trust with the secret. Through these he extended his acquaintance with others. He promised them great things, respecting the kingdom of Munster, filled their minds with visions of revolutions, and brought them up to extravagant daring. For the fame of the affairs at Munster had kindled an extensive desire among men, for violent innovations upon everything sacred and secular; so that the con-

tagion spread in Amsterdam with incredible rapidity. There was a man in that city by the name of Henry Goetbelit, a man of noble frame and stature, who had served in many wars, and was highly esteemed for valor. He had been initiated into the mysteries of anabaptism. Geles made him a partner of his secret counsels. But without occasion he was suspicious, lest he should be betrayed, for if he should be known, in his present circumstances, to have changed his name, it might endanger his life. At length, by persuasion of some trusty friends, among whom was Goetbelit, he adopted a plan for safety. It was this. He went immediately to the court of Brabant, and disclosed a part of his history; told how he had come from Munster, with great sums of money, and gone to Holland, and, for the sake of security, had changed his name. And now he asked pardon of the government, and intimated that he might be of service to them, against the anabaptists. He obtained pardon, on condition that he should deliver the city of Munster up to the emperor. But these conditions of course were secret. Papers were given him, authenticated with the great seal, and money for raising troops. He returned to Amsterdam, exulting in his success, threw off all disguise, and took his proper name. Thus he gained the confidence of the government, and leading men of the city, by showing them his papers, and rehearsing his magnificent promises. He was regarded as a great man, on account of the great

work which he had undertaken. Having thus put all suspicion to sleep, in that quarter, he applied his mind to the perpetration of a stupendous crime. He entered into a conspiracy with the anabaptists, for getting possession of Amsterdam, and making of it another Munster. First of all, he made Goetbelit partner and second of his design; and then he opened the subject to his other friends, whom he had privately convened. They approved, especially in view of the great ease with which he said it might be done. He added, that everthing favored the design; the minds of the people were well disposed towards them, excepting a few sardanapaluses, drunkards, and gluttons, the favor of Providence, and the oracle of Henry Hilversum. They went so far as to divide off among themselves the houses of the rich, before the victory was obtained. The time was set, to undertake the horrible work. A piece of money was given to each, as a token of the pledge to the conspiracy; and the striking of the bell, on the court house, was to be the signal for the general rising. But just as the horrid plot was about being carried into effect, the knowledge of it providentially transpired. There was at that time a celebration of a splendid festival. All the magistracy and opulence of the city were collected; and now, late at night, and in the midst of the festivities, a young man communicated the information, that anabaptists, to the number of six hundred, had assembled to make an attack upon them.

The government discredited the report; but while discussing it, the band of the anabaptists actually rushed forth from the place of their concealment, in the most tumultuous manner. They invade the court house, slay some of the guards, and take others prisoners. One of the guards at that moment awoke from sleep, and knowing nothing of the nature of the tumult, but thinking it would increase the disturbance in the city, if any one at that time should ring the bell, as it would be very natural to do, secured the bell rope, so that it could not be rung, and the conspirators' signal for the general rising, could not be given. The consuls escaped with difficulty, and roused the citizens, and blockaded the ways to prevent the force of the anabaptists concentrating at the court house. By keeping these passages guarded, they defeated the plan of the conspirators, and silence was after awhile restored, and that position of things retained till the light of day enabled the citizens to bring all their forces against the rioters besieged in the court house; and after the shedding of much blood, to restore order.

Such severe and disheartening experience had the anabaptists, in all their bold attempts to get the government of the world by force. Yet their doctrine had struck its roots deep, and sent them far and wide among the people. Many still remained, who were willing to peril their lives in its defence. Distinguished among these, was John Batenburg, of whom

we shall have more to say hereafter. He affirmed that he had been raised up of God, to restore the kingdom of Christ, that was overthrown at Munster. He gained the admiration of those of his faction. He taught them, that it was their duty to demolish churches, when they could; to plunder or destroy all property which they should find unguarded. Those who apostatised from their faith, were to be slain with the sword, if they could be found where it could be done secretly; and they broke into houses of such, and, indeed, of any opposed to their sect, and murdered them upon their beds, or took them out and hung them upon trees; and thus they became a terror to all classes of people.

Yet, notwithstanding such propensities for crimes, a portion of the people having fanatical susceptibilities, were so bewitched after this sort of preachers and doctrine, that the infection seemed to inhere in the very soil. Their feigned appearance of piety, simplicity, and sincerity, demented many of the common people. Spanheim, writing one hundred years afterwards, said, that the sect existed in his day, in the Netherlands, and that some well-meaning and zealous men, adhered to them; and the fact, that this sect was by the papists classed among the reformed, and counted one of the fruits of the reformation, affixing the stigma of such licentiousness and crimes to the reformed, wrought a prejudice against the reformation, and became an obstacle to the further ad-



vance of it. And some branches of these sects, particularly the Mennonites, exist at the present day, holding, under some modifications and mitigations, the same doctrine held by the originators of the sect.

And this may account for the fact, that it has been so impossible for the baptist denomination, as it now exists, to get a foothold and extend itself in Germany, and, possibly, for the persecutions which some missionaries of that denomination have recently experienced in Denmark, and in other states in that part of the world. The remembrance of what disorders have been perpetrated by a sect giving prominence to the distinguishing doctrine of the baptists, and an inability to distinguish between the baptists and the anabaptists, may have made German minds so especially cautious against allowing the efforts of the baptists among them.

But to return to the fortunes of the original anabaptists. As the builders of Babel were confounded in their language, and split up into divisions, and sent abroad over the face of the earth, to spread and perpetuate the knowledge of their own wickedness and punishment, so, for a like reason, God smote the anabaptists, not only with giddiness, but also with a division of tongues, or sentiments, and suffered them to split into parties, and carry on fierce contentions among themselves, like so many Midianites, dashing one against another, in the darkness of night, and tearing out each other's vitals, by mutual



anathemas. It would be tedious to go into all the names, doctrines, and politics, into which the sect was divided. We can attempt only to sketch a general view of the divisions and subdivisions. Some of the sects took their names from some distinguished teachers; some from the mode of life which they followed; and some from the place of their abode or origin.

Of the first class, some were called Muncerians, from Muncer. This name distinguishes those who entered into his impious doctrines and criminal plots. Some were called Huttites, from Jerome Hutt. These, after the example of their master, called themselves the Israel of God; boasted of visions and trances, and those always of the horrid and tragic kind; giving out that the Canaanites are all to be slain, with the sword; that the day of judgment is at hand; that they can hear the commencing sounds of the angel's trumpet. And to show that they really believed what they said, they began, like our Millerites, to squander their property, as so much baggage, for which they should have no use in the future journey. But being by the means reduced to poverty, and out of patience in waiting for the end of the world, they paid dear for their credulity, and for the delirium of their master. Others took the name of Augustinians, from a certain Augustine, of Bohemia. These added to the other doctrines, common to the anabaptists, the notion, that the souls of all believers, who have died, have been and will be excluded from the vision of

God, till the last judgment. Others were called Hoffmanians, from a restless man by the name of Hoffman, endowed with a popular eloquence. He began his career at Strasburg, and drew great crowds after him. He is generally esteemed the patriarch of the anabaptists in Upper Germany. He came out in splendor in 1528, and with singular skill in setting off his wares, he met with great success. Multitudes, having itching ears, adhered to him; and such authority had he, that his disciples esteemed him as the Elias, who had come as the precursor of the final coming of Christ. By reason of the disturbance which he created at Strasburg, a synod was called in 1532, and he was admitted to a public disputation with the ministers, who refuted the doctrines and dreams of the fanatic man; but they did not arrest his operations. His adherents made the discovery, that Strasburg was the New Jerusalem, in which Christ's kingdom was to be erected, at his second coming; they joined with him Cornelius Potterman, as Enoch to Elijah, the honored attendants of Christ's manifestation. But as they appeared to be hastening towards sedition, Hoffman was arrested and imprisoned. Now his sect boasted, that he would come out with the 144,000 of the sealed of God, who would smite the earth with a curse, and crush all that opposed. For a long time, they waited, and waited, in vain, for this glorious liberation of their venerated Elijah. Hoffman wrote to them somewhat after the manner of Father Miller,

In our time, discovering a little mistake in his calculations, and saying that they must rest two years, after the example of Ezra and Haggai, whose great work in rebuilding the temple was prohibited for two years, till God awoke the spirit of Cyrus. Having thus confirmed the errors and hopes of his friends, he died in prison, indefinitely postponing the expected deliverance.

To the class of those deriving their name from their leaders, belong also the Gabrielites and the Hutterians of Moravia; and also the Mennonites, from Menno, a distinguished apostle of the sect, who sprang from a small town in Friesland, in the neighborhood of Bolswert. He held the common doctrines of the anabaptists. He had a public debate with Martin Micron, in 1554, but was not checked in his course of spreading his errors, till he died at Oldesloc, between Lubec and Hamburg, in 1561. His writings evince his fickleness and contradictions; and yet he is regarded as more moderate in his opinions than the rest of the anabaptists. From him most of the anabaptists of the low countries were afterwards wont to be called Mennonites, though many of them did not adopt his principles; and the real Mennonites were divided into two classes, called the older and the younger.

To the class of anabaptists named from leaders, belong also the Servetians, the Georgians, and the Schwenkenfeldians, on account of anabaptism and other heterodox notions which they held, in common

with anabaptists. Servetians were so called from Michael Servetus, whose name has been rung in so many changes, in connection with Calvin's.

The Georgians, or Davidians, were so called from David George, whose execrable history we are yet to rehearse; and the punishment of whose crimes came some years too late, and affected only his lifeless corpse.

The Schwenkenfeldians were so called from Caspar Schwenkenfeld, sprung of a noble family of Silesia. He traveled over the chief provinces of Upper Germany, and sprinkled his doctrines in Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ulm, and Strasburg, and by his eloquence and sanctimony, he made a powerful impression, even upon some of the nobility. And with a heart better than his head, he died in Suabia, in 1561, over seventy years of age.

Divers of the sects of the anabaptists took their name from the way of life which they followed. These were the apostolicals, the spirituals, the cathari, the silent ones, the adiaphorists, or indifferents, the enthusiasts, or extatics, the libertines, the Hamaxarians, and the Borborites. The apostolicals professed to be imitators of the apostles, leaving their wives, children, professions, arts, and property, wandering about without shoes, purse, or money. They washed each others' feet, and were also called podonipts, or feet-washers. The spirituals, or separates, were so called, because they professed to avoid conformity to the

world, and affected singularity of dress, sanctimony, peculiarity of food, gait, and habits of sleeping. They avoided public assemblies, weddings, festivals, music; and even a smile was not allowed.

The cathari, or the pure, were so called, because they held that infants were free from all sin, and that adults could and ought to be; and that the church should consist only of perfect ones.

The silents avoided much speaking, discountenanced both public preaching and private debates about religion, on the ground that in these evil times the world was not fit to have the gospel preached to them.

The euchites ascribed to prayer the power of averting all evils, and procuring for themselves all good, without their labor or pains. They held that it was their special privilege to cease from labor, and procure whatever they wanted, by prayer.

The adiaphorists were reckoned among the anabaptists; though the pedobaptism, the civil law, the preaching of the gospel, the sacrament, the use of creeds, which other anabaptists regarded as sinful, they held to be indifferent. They held that the spirit supplies the defect of externals, and that it was very unwise to bring one's life into danger by a confession of faith.

The enthusiasts and extatics boasted of inspirations, extasies, and private discourses with God. They preferred their own prophecies to the written word, and

subjected the written word to be judged by their dreams.

The libertines boasted of deliverance from both divine and human laws, and promulgated the doctrine of community of wives, and practiced it.

The Hamaxarians and Borborites seceded from the old Mennonites, on account of their habit of severely anathematizing those that disagreed with them or went out from them; and they formed a community, to receive those excommunicated from all other sects; and so they brought together the odds and ends of all parties—the filth and offscouring of all. The authors of this sect were Henry Nældman, and George Heynes. Three new sects had arisen, not long before, 1555, in Flanders, which anathematized each other. The occasion of the division was this—Thomas Beenckes, a bishop of the anabaptists at Framaker, had a friend, who wished to buy a house; and there was one offered for sale, which he had a prospect of getting; and Beenckes went privately and outbid his friend, and secured the house to himself; and out of this transaction, grew the division of the sect; the one portion accusing him of fraud, and the other justifying him. And the two parties, upon this, exchanged anathemas, with all vengeance. And a third party, called neutrals, disapproved of the purchase, but said it was a trivial sin; and the three sects, agreeing in everything else, launched anathemas at each other; and then, out of pity for the anathematized, the Ham-

axarians formed a church for the especial accommodation of excommunicated ones.

As to those sects which took a name from places of their origin or residence, it would not be edifying to go into a description of them, nor of the shades of difference between them. For nothing was more shifting than the opinions of this class of men. Their doctrines hung loose upon them, like wreaths about a pillar. They made much use of ambiguous phrases, and involved themselves in a sort of unintelligible rhapsody, and for the slightest causes, split into parties, and excommunicated each other.

Besides these more specific names, the whole sect were called by several names; as, for instance, catabaptists, because they inveighed against the baptism of infants; anabaptists, because they repeated baptism; enthusiasts, because they feigned visions and revelations, and the like. Many of them were also called libertines, either from their doctrines, or both from their doctrines and practice. Some were doctrinal libertines only, and others were practically so, disorderly, factious and licentious, raising insurrections, and practicing community of wives.

Thus we have given as full a description of the divisions and subdivisions of this sect, as a common share of patience will allow. For about a hundred years after the reformation, this sect, in its various ramifications, constituted the main source of opposition to the doctrines of the reformation, excepting what



was experienced from the Romish church. Putting papacy first, anabaptism stood next among the forces antagonist to the doctrines of the gospel. Indeed, it embodied, essentially, most of the principles now held by each and all the sects opposed to evangelical religion; and yet this was hardly to be considered as one sect. The term anabaptist was a generic term, covering many sects as distinct from each other as most of the anti-evangelical sects now are. Hence, Luther makes it out, that he had been assailed by so many sects. In his commentary on Galatians, speaking of a complaint which was in his time as common as it is now, that the church has no quietness and rest from contention with new sects constantly coming up, he says, that he has "no hope of quietness so long as Christ and Belial do not agree. If one heresy die, soon another will spring up; for the devil does neither slumber nor sleep. I myself, who (though I am nothing,) have been in the ministry of Christ about twenty years, can truly witness, that I have been assailed by more than twenty sects, some of which are already dead; and some, as the parts of worms or bees that are cut in two, do yet pant for life. And the ministers of Christ, if they will be counted faithful in the day of Christ, must be surely persuaded, that Paul has not said in vain, that there must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest."

The facts which we have exhibited, touching these sects, will justify the severe language which Luther

used respecting them. He says of them, "Who ever heard of so many monsters bursting out at once into the world, as we see in the anabaptists alone; in whom satan breaks out, as it were, the last blast of his kingdom; as though he would not only destroy the whole world, with seditions, but also, by innumerable sects, swallow up Christ with his church. Who seeth not here, in the anabaptists, men not possessed with devils, but even devils themselves, possessed with worse devils."

Some of the most material parts of the anabaptist history stand connected with the life and history of David George; and our work would be incomplete if we did not here set forth some of the events connected with it. We follow a narrative prepared by Nicolas Blesdick, a son-in-law of that arch fanatic. Blesdick had written a complete history of anabaptism, but was reluctant to publish it. He had been a disciple of David George, and had married his daughter, but was afterwards converted to the truth; and God mercifully used him, as an instrument of building the faith which he once destroyed. He wrote the history of anabaptism, with the intent to publish it; but out of a regard to his father-in-law, whose detestable deliriums his history exposed, he hesitated and delayed the publication. But some of his friends, from time to time, borrowed his manuscript, and copied one part after another, without his knowledge, till they secured the whole of that part relating to his father-in-law;

and the substance of that part, we will here give. We have already given a sketch of the history of Hoffman, and shown, that he taught that Strasburg was chosen of God, as the new Jerusalem, from which was to go out the preaching of the true gospel to all parts of the world, as from Jerusalem in the days of the apostles. He also maintained, that a new order of apostles, or men like the apostles, was to be raised up there, to be sent out for the regeneration of the world. But the Strasburgians imprisoned Hoffman, and rejected his doctrines, and banished his teachers.

Then John Matthias, afterwards so celebrated, as we have seen in the history of Munster, together with eight of Hoffman's disciples, first introduced anabaptism at Amsterdam, and so became the leaders of the sect there, without the knowledge of Hoffman. And they had great success throughout Lower Germany, and more especially in Munster, as we have seen. The honor of being the new Jerusalem of the sect was now transferred from Strasburg to Munster; and it was now given out, that by reason of the unbelief and tyranny of Strasburg, God had rejected that city, and chosen Munster, for Mount Zion. And the belief of this revelation was confirmed, when it was seen that the city was resisting so successfully the besieging force. But when Hoffman, in prison, learned that Matthias and his friends, besides propagating the doctrine far and wide, had such wonderful success in Munster, though pleased, he did not wholly approve;

partly because he had always had suspicion of Matthias, and partly because Mathias's system differed somewhat from his own. Hoffman's system, though condemned by the evangelical churches, yet appeared to them more tolerable than those of the other anabaptist factions. For he did not approve of Matthias rebaptising, and exciting tumults, but often expressed his grief on account of it; and he predicted, that it would have such an end, as that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. His view was, that no revolutions should be attempted, till after the example of that begun upon the day of Pentecost, God should endow by his spirit, and send forth new apostles. As to such matters as the magistracy, the use of the sword, of contracts, &c., he admitted them to be lawful.

And in West Friesland, there were some anabaptist teachers, who, having been often disappointed as to the fulfilment of Hoffman's predictions, and having seen the miscarriage of many seditious plots, began to entertain doubts, and to whisper them abroad among their friends. Among these was Ubbo, a Frieslander, and Theodorick, his brother. The one was learned in Latin and Greek, and the other wholly unlearned, though gifted with popular eloquence. These were joined by Menno, who had just before been a popish priest, in the village of Witmasum, near the town of Bolswert. These, by finding fault with the affairs of Munster, effected nothing, but to bring odium upon themselves, and to be denounced by other anabap-

tists, as enemies of the kingdom of Christ. But after Munster was captured, and the sedition quelled, they began to speak more freely against the seditious principles, cherished by the Munsterians. Others, however, defended them, and denounced their opponents as antichrists. But even these did not agree among themselves. Among them was one John Theodorick, from a noble family of Batenburg, and thence called John Batenburg. He, with his friends, disagreed somewhat from the Munsterians; and because they did not wholly come up to his standard, he called them lukewarm, cowards, and apostates.

A like disagreement also existed between the opposers of the Munster doctrines. The disciples of Hoffman, in the Rhenish provinces, in Brabant, Holland, England, &c., taught one way, and Ubbo and his party, in Friesland, and other places, taught another. The points about which they differed, were two: first, what is the nature of Christ's kingdom? and what is the way of restoring it? Second, whether a plurality of wives, and divorce for bad morals, and difference of faith, is lawful? The Ubbites, which are also called Mennonites, taught that no state of Christ's kingdom is to be expected upon earth, different from the present, neither any renewal of the order of apostles; but, that they to whom a baptized people should commit the preaching of the word and the administration of sacraments, might lawfully exercise authority, as long as their commission should con-

tinue; and they held, that the expectation of receiving a new apostleship, entertained by the Hoffmannians and the Munsterians, was both fanatic, seditious, and damnable. Hoffman had held, that the ministry of the anabaptists in Germany, before him, was a rude and imperfect work, like that of the apostles before the day of Pentecost; and that he, having received a pentecostal spirit, and endowment, had superseded and set aside that ministry; and that by the new apostles of his order, the new Jerusalem was to be built, the temple opened, and the way prepared for the marriage of the lamb. But before that, all the first born of Egypt, that is, the power of the pope, and the governments that defend him, must be destroyed. And this was to be done by two kings of the christian world, one of which would be the king of Denmark, to whom he dedicated his commentary on the Revelations. By the favor of these kings, the new apostles that should go out from Strasburg, would receive power for evangelizing the whole world. But the Munsterians, touching this matter, held that the time for afflicting the saints was finished; and the time of the harvest had come, in which God would avenge his people, and subdue their enemies, and that by the same instrument by which his people had been persecuted; that the sword, that had been drawn against them, should be by them returned into the hearts of their enemies; and that, therefore, the people of God must take up arms for the defence of

the saints, and for avenging their injuries, and for purging the earth of iniquity, violence, and crime, so that holiness might reign universally. In these views, the Munsterians agreed. But the Hoffmanians and Mennonites condemned them as furious and seditious robbers, and refused even to eat with them; and they condemned their revival of polygamy as adultery. But in the anabaptists' doctrines in general, they agreed with them, except that the Hoffmanians held that the practice of re-baptizing was for a rude and infantile age; and to be set aside by the advent of the spirit; wherefore they discouraged its use, and baptized none but those who were anxious for it and insisted upon it. But Ubbo and Menno, in the meantime, claimed to have had their powers as if canonical, and instituted by the apostles. The Batenburgians abolished all authority of re-baptizing, on the ground that peace and grace departed from the earth, when John Buckold, king of Munster, transferred to his right side, the sword which the noble youth had carried upon his left; thus signifying, that the grace of the gospel had flourished long enough, and those who rejected it, should perish by the sword. Yet those who after that time wished to join them, though they could not be taken into the number of the children of Israel, yet, like the Gibeonites of old, they might become servants to them.

But after the slaughter of the anabaptists in Munster, their brethren were a little more moderate in



their demands, and more cautious in forming new plots of violence ; yet their seditious doctrine adhered to them, with great tenacity, and they defended it with energy and determination. Foremost among its defenders was John Batenburg, the leader of the Batenburgians, above named. He affirmed, that he was raised up to restore the kingdom of Christ, which fell at Munster ; and he easily gained the confidence of those entertaining a like revolutionizing spirit. Having collected them into an organized party, he led them about as a furious mob, destroying churches and whatever property they found unprotected. Apostates from their faith and party, they punished with the sword ; and to assassinate apostates, or any of their enemies, they crept into houses by stealth, or broke in by force, and cut the throats of men upon their beds ; or shut them up and burnt them in their houses ; or dragged them out and hung them upon trees. Thus they rendered themselves a terror to all. But the remnants of the Munster faction, though they continued to use violence towards those opposed to their faith, could not go all lengths with these ; and hence the Batenburgians denounced them, as cowards and villains, fit to be killed off with the rest.

And while the Batenburgians were thus prowling about, there arose others, men and women, claiming the same authority ; among whom was one Joachim, a goldsmith, privately uttering his oracles in the city of Lower Wessalia. He seduced many well-meaning

families, till he was arrested, imprisoned, and punished. In Friesland, Westphalia, and other places, there were teachers defending the seditious doctrines, who yet did not join this society of robbers; and these dissensions impeded the course of the anabaptists. Hence, those sincerely attached to the cause, labored to bring about a union of parties, and secured the meeting of a convention, in a town of Westphalia, of anabaptist teachers, of all parties.

From Friesland came Matthias Belkense, and Tirard Snekense, both old men; the last of whom was a little while after beheaded; also Steward Clarke, formerly a schoolmaster; from Gelderland, John Juliacense, Christopher and Henry Sutphaniense; from England, John Matthews, of Middleburg, who was afterwards burnt at London; from Upper Utrecht, John Trajectense, who afterwards died a similar death. Some came from Westphalia, but none from Strasburg, because of dreams and visions forbidding. Ubbo and his friends came not, for fear of plots laid for their lives; and Batenburg, suspecting his doctrines would be condemned, came not, but he sent a spy, to take note of what was done. The place of meeting was near Buckholt, in Westphalia. The Munster doctrine of polygamy and the corporeal reign of Christ, was fiercely opposed, by Matthias and John of Utrecht, and defended by the Frieslanders, Westphalians, and Geldrians. And the matter was debated so fiercely, that at one time there was danger lest the

defenders of Munster doctrines should attempt violence and slaughter upon the Hoffmanians. But David George at this crisis interposed as mediator, and sought to restore peace. The debate was here ended. It having been found, that there was an agreement as to most of the anabaptist doctrines, and a disagreement upon only two, it was agreed, at the instance of David George, that they should abstain from force and contention, and pray for light, to see the way to complete union; and they further agreed, to condemn the practice of resorting to violence to revenge injuries, and execute judgments, and from capital punishments privately inflicted, and from destroying churches, and that the Batenburgians, who had for a time been required to abstain from re-baptizing, might now have the privilege restored to such as were evidently pious men.

The author of this union was David George, of Delf. Before this, his name had been celebrated among the anabaptists of Holland. For he had published many popular songs; and he had headed mock processions, carrying about the bread of the sacrament, in derision of the popish mass; accusing the worshippers of the mass of idolatry, and calling upon the government and people to repent. For this he was imprisoned, and after a while he was liberated, after having had his tongue bored through. After his return from the convention, it was everywhere proclaimed abroad, that David George had acted the

mediator, and united the anabaptists. And, elated by his celebrity, he put forth a book, discussing the controverted points, and giving decisions in the tone of an umpire, between the parties; and so he awoke the opposition of both parties against him. Batenburg complained, that under pretexts of peace, he had thrown minds into doubt and remissness, as to the duty of taking up arms for restoring Christ's kingdom. Hence he called him Absalom, who by his fair speeches stole the hearts of the anabaptists, and impeded his divine mission. The Hoffmanians, on the other hand, complained that he would do the same with Batenburg, only that he cunningly concealed his principles; that with an excessive desire of peace, he conceded to the Munsterians what could not be conceded without great damage; and both the book and the author were blamed on both sides. And so the four sects, seemingly united for a time, divided again, and continued distinct; though only two of them continued for a long time. For the remnants of the Hoffmanians and Munsterians either died out, or returned to the churches, and left the ground to the Batenburgians; and the Mennonites became much the larger of the two, and spread over the whole vicinity of the Baltic sea and the German ocean. But the Mennonites became somewhat divided, embracing several sects, under one general name. One of these subdivisions was that of the Davidians, the origin of which we are now to speak more particularly.

The foundation of the whole scheme of the Davidians, rests on dreams and visions, which David George alleges that he had in his study, four months after the Westphalian convention. In that convention he says he had endeavored to sound the views and intentions of all parties; and in meditating what ought to be said to this and that, he was thrown into a perplexity, and could determine nothing, and he began to accustom himself to a more severe kind of life, and to give himself wholly to fasting and prayers. After continuing this course for awhile, it happened on a certain day, that while standing by his table, he fell into a trance, and saw in vision, throngs of boys, spitting their hands, and stamping their feet, and shouting with exquisite joy, because that to them all the kings of the earth were to come in subjection; and to deliver to them all their jewels and treasures. Then turning to the opposite side, he saw women adhering to the wall, in a state of nudity. At which sight he exclaimed, Now, Lord, I can see into all things, for to the pure all things are pure. And then he saw these women changed into doves, and in the instant of the change by mutual coition they became pregnant. Here was the basis of David's theory. How the theory proceeded from this beginning, we shall see hereafter. We will here give the several articles of that theory, which constituted the creed of the Davidians. And because we wish to preserve the whole, we will give it in Latin where the indelicacy of the matter forbids us to give it in English.

## CREED OF DAVID GEORGE.

*Article 1.* The sect of the anabaptists, begun by Hoffman, is the true church, in which all the prophecies respecting the reign of Christ are to be fulfilled.

2. This people are the little ones, of which Zechariah (Zech. 13: 7) prophesies, that the shepherd should be smitten, and the sheep scattered, and God should turn his hand against the little ones; and that the Munsterians, Batenburgians, Hoffmanians, and Mennonites, were the two parts, which were to be cut off, and the Davidians were the third part, which was to be left.

3. This third part are that number, who, especially, from those two other factions, will receive the doctrine of David George, and they, through his fiery doctrine, and severe discipline, shall be purged from all error of judgment, and all depravity, and be restored to primeval innocence.

4. When his ministry is perfected upon them, the whole world will be subject and submissive to them; and all power will be given to them, and that spontaneously, without any warfare, but by universal acclamation. And God will give proof of his omnipotence, in bringing so many of so powerful enemies so willingly at their feet.

5. The Batenburgians, who had exercised such violence upon their enemies, and destroyed men and the fruits of the earth, were those angels, (Rev. 7)

to whom power was given to hurt the earth, the sea, and the trees; and David was that angel who commanded the four angels no more to hurt the earth, till God had sealed his servants.

6. Those who had before been re-baptized, were indeed renewed, but yet were as infants. But the opening of David's ministry, was the commencement of adult age. To him had been revealed the mode of coming to mature and perfect manhood. And this revelation had been made through some daily and nightly visions.

7. The shame attached to nakedness, [*pudorem genitalium membrorum,*] came by transgression, and remains as a punishment of sin, and must now be overcome, and destroyed, and all men restored to the simplicity and innocence of paradise. And all anabaptists must make efforts, through faith in Christ, to overcome this shame, and wholly root it out, as the work of the devil.

8. All sins of which anabaptists are conscious in themselves, are to be openly confessed in their assemblies, for their own shame and humiliation; and this confession is again and again to be repeated, till all pride be crucified, and all dissembling and hypocrisy be removed.

The above doctrines are deduced from the vision of the naked women upon the wall, and what immediately follow, come from the coition of the doves.

9. *Ad hanc perfectionem venire contententibus,*



posthac abstinendum a congressibus conjugalibus, et in pœnitentia et veniæ deprecatione opisque Sp. S. imploratione uberius perseverandum, donec omnis uxoria voluptas intemperantior plane fuerit repressa subactaque, succedatque tantus rerum cœlestium amoris ardor, ut illis cupiditatibus plane mortui et alieni videantur. Atque ita zelo et studio cœlestium rerum accensos ac inflammatos coire debere amore sanctæ prolis consequendæ. Tum enim ex talibus nascituram sobolem nunquam defecturam, quippe in utero matris sanctificatam, ex qua facies terræ renovari possit.

10. All, who after the common manner shall be born of unrenewed parents, will be the progeny of adultery, and be cursed to eternal destruction, with their parents, and all that adhere to them; because they are rashly and wickedly born, and like the tares come up without the sowing of the Lord.

11. Usus conjugalem qui fit cum mulieribus quæ in utero conceperunt, aut cum mulieribus quibus concipiendi spes non est, esse honestam fornicationem.

12. Minime damnandos esse qui primæ uxori et alias adjungunt, eo fine et respectu ne se in somniis polluant effusione seminis, aut rem habendo cum muliere quæ jam conceperit aut effœta sit.

The above articles David proposed to all anabaptist teachers. But of those which follow, he was more shy, divulging them only to his more select friends and confidants. And these may be called *The Da-*

*vidian Mysteries.* And we regret that they cannot, without a breach of morality and decency, be given in plain English.

13. Qui in jugi hac pœnitentia et adversus concupiscentiarum illecebras dimicatione perseverantes tantum profecerunt, ut jam uxoria, voluptate sua sponte non moveantur, non inardescant, tales se quieti, quasi jam sit debellatum non tradant, sed ulterius eluctenter, donec ad eam mentis firmitatem et spiritus robur veniant, ut infirmata concupiscentia, et defæcatis carnis affectibus, eorum oculi Sp. S. imperio ita sint subjecti, ut repressis cupiditatum illecebris possint membra genitalia non solum intueri sed et penetrare, &c., &c., idque sine carnis titillatione, ut qui huic uxoriæ voluptati plane mortui videantur. Juxta illud Esa. 11: 8, 9. Item Job 40: 19, 28. Atque huc refert dictum 1 Johan 3: 8. Putabat enim veneris intemperantiam tanquam diabolum quendam lascivium arte quadam probationis evocandum, eliciendum, quemadmodum aves alliciantur esca, delinitæ capiuntur et occiduntur. In like manner all other vicious propensities are to be elicited, provoked, irritated, and, as it were, inflamed, in order that they may come out, and expose their heads to be cut off.

14. Qui autem in jugi pœnitentia et assiduo contra hos carnis stimulos, motus et assultus certamine eo progressi sunt, ut omnem coitum et uxoriam voluptatem negligere posse videantur, eos deinde ulterius eluctari oportere, ut libenter videant, atque etiam

flagitent, ut ejusdem religionis spiritualis frater eorum uxores in possessionem sumat, cumque ea congregiatur ipso conspiciente. Hacce prius animo atque voluntate consideranda, perpendenda discutiendaque, donec animas in amore divino incalescendo in actum prorumpat, uxores tradat spiritualibus confratribus ad hoc negotium excitandum et promovendum veluti angelis messis divinitus emissis. Juxta illud Math. 13: 41. Hujus autem proprietatis affectionalis veram abnegationem et absolutam mortificationem esse mortem quam D. Paulus 1 Cor. 15: 26. Vocat hostem ultimum in fine seculi destruendum; quo victo Davidianos spiritu, animo, corpore plane puros, sanctos et perfectos futuros; et liberos educturos in utero matris sanctificatos et inter omnes gentes agnoscendos, quod sint generatio sancta et germen justum.

15. Those who have attained to this state, shall be exempt from all laws which now restrict marriages, both of consanguinity and affinity. These relations, whether of father, mother, brother, or sister, having arisen from laws, shall cease; and with them all the properties and singularities of each shall vanish. To this point is what Christ said, to the pharisees, that they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be like the angels. For Christ here does not speak of the cessation of the procreation of children, but of the cessation of matrimonial obligations and restrictions. The resurrection of which Christ speaks, is spiritual; that is, a purifying of the mind from all

the lusts of the flesh; and that resurrection is even now coming, and on the point of producing a new world, by which he will reprove that first literal and legal world.

16. Upon the people of this new world no law is to be imposed, limiting the commerce of the sexes. For they are led by the spirit, and cannot do wrong. But the end of this commerce ought to be, to try their sufficiency or insufficiency for the war against the lusts of the flesh; and either to give thanks for the strength obtained, or to persevere in penance and prayer, and not persuade themselves that they are what they are not, and what they are not yet worthy to be; and also, that they may know with what and how great a domestic enemy they have to contend, that they may the more earnestly implore aid of the holy spirit, and watch and strive, to crucify and mortify the flesh, to a complete victory over it, and so at length enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God.

17. Such persons, therefore, ought not to be bound by any specific and express marriage covenant, binding one woman to one man. For God, by the secret influence of the spirit, would cause that like should be joined to like; that is, an angelic woman to an angelic man; and that hereafter there should be no incongruities of temper and habit, between the parties united. But in the meantime, while this fullness of time, this state of perfection is waited for, if the im-

perfections of the present time demand that any one shall secure for himself a partner, and rear children, he shall unite himself the husband to the wife, or the wife to the husband, as a sister to her brother; and that only for the present, but not forever. And the wife must be related to the husband, not as her lord, but as to a faithful guide. For the word husband or lord cannot properly be applied to any but to the Lord Christ, that is, David George. But others united in affection should be called brothers and sisters, and not husbands and wives. For whatever has been once devoted to God and Christ, can by no man be possessed or claimed as property, or brought under law or servitude, for that reason, because it has been devoted to Christ David. Whatever the same Lord permits, commands, and makes free, that without blame may be done, so far as he permits, and no further. All therefore ought to be united to one head, and subjected to one Lord and shepherd, that is, Christ David. For he will be the true Lord and father of all; and will be addressed by that title. Thy maker is thy husband. But God requires this of all, who will be his servants, and who will put the world to shame. While the men of the world marry, and rear children, they join flesh to flesh, for the sake of riches, honors, or pleasures; they shall perish, immersed in these things.

18. As minds are to be purified from fleshly lusts, by undergoing temptation and denial, so also the

mind is to be tried by renouncing property in outward things. For when God saw this our age to be wholly corrupt, he selected from the whole mass one race of men, to wit, the Davidians, in whom he might give a specimen of his goodness, and fulfilled upon them what he had promised by his prophets. Of this people he requires, that they renounce the present world, that is their kindred, their property, and give them to the spiritually poor, and so come naked into the new world, that is the Davidian communion, and obey the voice of David, and confide in him. Then God will cause all the people of the earth to acknowledge the Davidians as his people. This discipline will be useful in several ways. It will give occasion for the exercise of faith, and to prove whether we will obey the call of God; whether, after the example of Abram, we can leave all and be prepared for any event, with this new people, or rather with Christ David. It will also give exercise to humility, since we must as beggars now receive all from the hands of another, that is, Christ David.

19. In renouncing these things, one would show himself obedient and sincere; and this, according to the teaching of the apostle, was a great object. But for the present, something more was required of this new people; that is, that they should reserve nothing to themselves of their own, but whatever they were, or had, or received from nature, or grace, they should freely expose it to danger, in the name of God and

Christ David. And for this Christ David, to endure reproach, and the imputation of being the most wicked men, not only from others, but from their own consciences. This is the internal and mystic suffering of Christ, to be loathed not only by others, but by ourselves.

20. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are one simple essence, and one undivided substance.

21. Concerning the trinity, his teaching is so confused, as to be scarcely intelligible. He seems to make the persons of the Godhead only so many different apparitions, or manifestations of the same God.

22. The whole course of Jesus Christ, in the flesh, his incarnation, birth, life, and doctrine, was only a bodily exemplar of a more perfect thing which is to be introduced again in these last days. Jesus Christ, having performed his servile work on earth, laid off his human nature, and had no more connection with it, than he had before his incarnation; and hence he is not to be expected, in that nature and person, to come to judge the world. But his spirit and soul had now returned, and, in a more excellent manner, had become incarnate, and united with the spirit of a certain man of this age, to wit, David George, whom from eternity he had chosen, that by him his only beloved, his second heart, he would glorify his name, and execute all his will.

23. By this Christ David, and by those who adhere to him, he would execute the last judgment.



He had been constituted a king, and the kingdom was delivered to him, and the province of judging, and that in the same manner as to Jesus Christ.

24. In the last judgment, there will not be any renovation of the earth, different from what is now seen. For what the apostles have said of a change, in the heavens and earth, refers to the minds of men.

25. The clouds in which Christ is to come, have reference to the minds of men, and Christ's coming to them, as a light out of darkness.

26. The archangel, which is to herald Christ's coming, is but a man, with an angelic mind, whose teaching of the doctrine of Christ David, shall be powerful as an angel's trumpet.

27. The place of eternal blessedness will not be above us, in the heavens, but upon earth.

28. The kingdom of God is nothing else than the spirit and life of Jesus Christ, now found in a single man. But the kingdom of Christ is a certain external state of glory, to which the holy are soon to be brought.

29. Paradise, heaven, hell, eternal life, &c., are to be found within men. For heaven signifies the goods and provisions for the mind, and their use; and earth, the goods of the body, and their use; and all these are soon to come into possession of the people of God.

30. The common opinion of angels and devils, that they are incorporeal spirits, having a substance and nature different from that of men, is false. For

angels are qualities and motions, which God gives to men.

31. Demons are a thing of nought, proceeding from the imaginations of men, under the wrath of God, which, though they have really no existence, yet as spectres of the night, are conjured up by the errors of men, for their punishment and terror. Both angels and demons began to come in use in Adam, and his posterity; and without man are nothing, and can be nothing, especially since the eternal Word has become incarnate anew, and has made his angels spirits, and his ministers flames of fire.

Thus the reader has before him the whole fabric of this impious doctrine; the foundation, the pillars, and the props, by which, for twenty years, its author endeavored to support it. It was of course rejected by all the reformed churches; and many of the anabaptists rejected it, as blasphemous against Jesus Christ, and as filled with profane errors. David George wrote many books, and, strange to tell, that, in connection with these accursed principles, which are scattered through them all, are sound rules of piety, taken from orthodox writings; and exhortations to watchfulness and prayers, urged with vehemence; and threatenings of the wrath of God, or consolations administered, and the like. To these are added descriptions of the purposes, motives, endeavors, and actions, of the old and of the new man; and then, interspersed here and there, are interpretations of

obscure passages of scripture, where he endeavors to elucidate, or rather involve in darkness, the types and allegories, and from them to prove whatever he will. And besides these there are found, now express and earnest assertions, now oblique insinuations, and now commendations of his own authority, mission, doctrine, and people. And whenever he evolves anything abstruse, he immediately breaks forth in praise and admiration of himself. And though he borrows the language of scripture, to celebrate his own praises, yet in his own manner he boasts a species of wisdom, never before heard of, but now put forth by himself; and thence he draws the conclusion, that all must adhere to this spirit and word of perfection, as he calls it, by a simple faith, and subject to it all the reason and the senses, excluding all doubt, questioning, or discussion, and that in spite of all the evidence of experience or of facts, or of scripture, or the convictions and consent of all wise and good men, of all times. But monstrous as these claims were, they were readily admitted by the great part of his sect. Being fascinated by the arts and bearing of the impostor, they thought this new doctrine too sacred, to be subjected to the judgment and examination of man or angels; but that all the writings and actions of their prophet, were to be received, and preached, and celebrated, as divine. They held that there was no greater sin, than to take the liberty (which they called the audacity of Lucifer,) to examine and dis-

cuss this new doctrine, and bring it to the standard of the gospel. This, they held, was to attempt to teach the Holy Spirit, and to prefer human wisdom to divine, and to provoke the wrath of God. Thus these unhappy men, without any good reason, any probable argument, not to say authority of the scriptures, (which they regarded as antiquated,) yea, contrary to the views of good men of all times, suffered themselves to be subjected to a bondage so base, and voluntarily to slip upon their necks the noose of satan's halter; or, rather, to be precipitated into a voluntary destruction—so sweet did that captivity appear to them, which they ought to have shunned more than death. But here was an instance of God's just severity against their ingratitude, and neglect of his gospel. According to that word of the prophet—Because this people have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men, therefore will I proceed to do a marvelous work, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. And according to these words of the apostle—And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusions, to believe a lie, that they all may be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Here it is intimated, that the ingratitude, unbelief, and hatred of the truth, deserved that God should thus give them up, to go blindfolded into the snares of the devil.

Having given the above statement of the doctrines of David George, we will next present a sketch of his proceedings in propagating them.

When he first put forth his doctrines in tracts and letters, and invited the concurrence of the Hoffmannians, Munsterians, Batenburgians, and Mennonites, he met with a repulse from all, with a few exceptions. But none of his adversaries opposed his doctrines more fiercely than Batenburg. But because he could not convince David by his writings, he meditated the purpose of doing it with the sword. And he avowed that David would soon be punished by him, or else he was no avenger of God's people. But he himself soon found an end to his life of violence and blood, and his threats and boasting came to nothing. But the death of one of the leaders of the contending factions did not extinguish their mutual hostilities. David affirmed, that he had not rashly taken up this contest; but that long before the spirit of Christ had predicted it in the Revelation, where an angel said Hurt not the earth, &c.; and when the number of his adherents had increased, many came together from divers places, to Delph, as formerly to the tabernacle of Moses, or the temple of Solomon, bringing gifts and offerings, and were more and more confirmed in the faith of his calling. He then sent letters far and wide, and some of his adherents greedily received his doctrine, and some doubted. Among the latter, were the remnants of the slaughter of Munster, who waited

in Friesland, expecting a conference with him; and to satisfy their wish, he went thither, accompanied with three or four select friends. After they had convened, and had much conversation, they at length gave to each other the right hand of fellowship. This was in the spring of 1538. His success now made him more bold, touching the Hoffmanians at Strasburg, who then had great authority with the anabaptists in Holland, Brabant, Flanders, England, and the tract of the Rhine. And he conceived the hope of uniting and absorbing them all into his own party. He sent letters to the principal men of the sect, in all those places, inviting them to meet in a council at Strasburg, on a set day. The invitation was accepted, and brought together most of the chief men of the sect. Great labor and expense had been incurred, for what seemed to them to be some great object. David opened the meeting by setting forth the purposes of calling the convention. He said that he had freely undertaken such a journey and labor, in order to hear from their own mouths, what they approved, and what they condemned in his doctrine, and in order to teach them more at large, and to urge upon them, as he had upon others, the work of restitution, which God had committed to him.

They replied, that they had read some of his books, but perhaps had not well understood them; but they found some things which they could not approve, without better proof, and that better proof they ex-

pected of him. He then began an exhortation, sufficiently long. The sum of it was, that the doctrine revealed to him from heaven, could not be understood, but by spiritual minds. This spiritual mind came to none but those who exercised themselves in penitence and prayer for pardon, persevering in these exercises, pouring forth tears and bitterness of grief; and none should cease praying, beseeching, and lamenting, till the remnants of sin were purged out of the very marrow of his mind. They should therefore bestir themselves, and inquire whether they had exercised themselves to piety in this way? and in these exercises they should have been constant and earnest, from the time of their first entering into the anabaptist covenant. Otherwise, they would be unfit to judge of the matters, which he had to propose to them. Repeating these and such like things, through his whole discourse, after many questions being put to him, and answered by him, he concluded his speech, with an exhortation to fervent prayer during the coming night. Their bodies, he said, were weary with the labor of long journeys; and on that account he desired the conference to be continued the next day. The next day they assembled, and David inquired, whether they had considered and understood what he had proposed? and whether they were able to see through and experience such things. They answered, that they thought that they understood him; that they had endeavored for a long time



to order their lives according to the measure of their faith, which they confessed was still imperfect.

He replied, that they had not fully understood him, which he was very sorry to see, as it made them incapable of understanding the mysteries which he had to propose. But since they did not know themselves, he was compelled to inquire, and search about the state of their lives, that he might open their eyes, and lead them to know themselves. He questioned them whether they had examined the sins of their youth, and of their riper years, so as to be confounded in their thoughts, and agitated in their whole frame; whether, in grief for sin, their eyes had been covered with darkness, and overpowered by an apprehension of the wrath of God; whether this wrath had so pressed them down, as to have caused them to walk in sadness, till the juices of their body were wasted, and their blood turned to water. He said that such penitence must needs prepare the way for understanding these divine mysteries; that if they had had no such experience, they ought to distrust their own judgment, and submit, like little children, to be taught by him, the more experienced.

The Hoffimanians replied, that they were conscious of infirmity; but they could not on that account, at once receive a new doctrine, proposed by never so great a saint, till they had tested it by the scriptures, since the apostles themselves commanded us to prove their own doctrines, before we receive them; and

that he, if he were wise, would prefer discerning and intelligent disciples, to the ignorant and credulous, who believing, without examination, might believe the opposite as easily to-morrow. Proof should therefore go before faith. But this idea David condemned and denounced, as human wisdom. He told them, that no one, not renewed, could understand the scriptures, much less judge of new revelations; that this doctrine was revealed to him from heaven, and could not be penetrated by human sagacity, nor deduced from a diligent reading of the scriptures; and on that account it required to be believed, without evidence from scripture, and with a simple unquestioning faith in him to whom it was revealed.

Next the Hoffmanians desired David to tell the way and manner in which this boasted revelation came to him. But they were not satisfied with his narrative of it, unless he could confirm it with the testimony of scripture. He then produced a little printed book, and read out of it some proofs, which he had gathered from scripture, for proving his doctrine about the confession of sin among themselves. But the Hoffmanians declared these to be not to the point, for defence of his new confession; and that they could not admit this new doctrine, especially when the scriptures solemnly forbade the receiving of doctrines at war with the scriptures. David was now greatly offended at their judgment of his doctrine, and denounced them as carnal, rebellious, and obsti-

nate, adding, that they would at some time repent, with lamentable weeping, of this their obstinacy ; that he had spared no pains to bring them to a better mind ; but they, by their own fault, had rendered themselves unworthy of this favor ; that the spirit had shown him, that they who had rejected the lower, were unfit to come to the higher mysteries. Of this judgment of his own works, the Hoffimanians bitterly complained, and also of his design, to break up the conference so suddenly, and said that they had hopes, that they should be able to receive the other parts of his doctrine ; and if this could not be, no harm would come from a friendly comparing of opinions. Yea, great benefit would accrue to his followers, if in reading the report of the conference, they should discover in his discourses, great light of wisdom and energy of truth ; and in their answers equal carnality, absurdity and falsehood. He replied, that his friends in Lower Germany did not desire such accurate proofs from scripture, since they had actual experience of the energy of the spirit, in their own hearts. It was useless for him to exchange words with them further ; since they distrusted his calling and mission, and condemned his whole doctrine. The spirit did not allow him to proceed further, but to admonish them of what he had done for them, and that unless they should repent, they would come under a deeper condemnation. They should not further conceal the old man, but make an honest confession, and become like little children.

To this they replied, that there were many and grave reasons why they could not bind themselves to such implicit faith in his doctrine ; that they had often in the same way been solicited, by those boasting of the spirit, and the event had shown the boasting vain ; that the scriptures warn us of dangers, in the last times, by reason of false doctrines ; and we have many and striking instances before our eyes, that they did not condemn his whole doctrine ; they were delighted with his exhortations to the fear of God, to penitence, mortification, perseverance, fervency in prayer, and whatever else agreed with the scriptures, but they could not with a good conscience approve of his views about confession of sin, and the necessity of exterminating the sense of shame, by exposing nakedness, and about divorce, and the like. But as they could not induce him to renew the conference upon these other points, they would leave the whole affair with God, and with him. On another day, one and another of the Hoffinianian teachers went to David, and invited him to converse ; if he would not renew the conference, at least to have casual conversation on the subject ; for there were some things in his books, about which they wished explanations ; as, for instance, whether children born in the state of perfection, of which he spoke, were liable to die ; and since he taught, that the world to come has its commencement now in his church, and in it there was to be a happy and numerous generation of children,

they desired to know, whether Jesus Christ himself would generate children. He answered, that he would affirm nothing certain as to this; but yet it was not improbable, that there would be procreation of children in the world to come; but it would not follow that Christ would beget children; for this was absurd. They replied, that it was a fair inference from his doctrine, since Christ acts first in all things; first from the dead, the first born among many brethren.

They next endeavored to elicit his views of the Trinity. He told them, it was a useless speculation; and that it required minds more spiritual than theirs, to understand it. At length the Hoffmanians resolved that David's doctrine was false, heretical, and pernicious; and this was done in his presence; for the facts above related were taken, by his son-in-law, from a record kept by himself. To this censure he made no reply, except that all God's prophets and apostles before him had been treated in the same way, by pharisees and men destitute of the spirit. Yet from books which he put forth afterwards, it is evident that he was more anxious about retaining his followers. For reports of the speeches in the conference had been published by consent of both parties. This conference took place in 1538.

The remnant of the Munsterians, after they understood that David had returned to Lower Germany, sent some of their leading men to him, to consult about difficult questions. With some of their princi-

ples, David was displeased, and after their departure he sent letters, with some strictures upon them; and much mutual discussion, both by word and writing, ensued. At length the Munsterians got a suspicion, respecting David and his mission. And by further correspondence, it was increased daily, till they abandoned his doctrine, and dissuaded others from joining him. The repulse which David had met at Strasburg, probably had done much to open their eyes. This defection of the Munsterians, who had great influence through Westphalia and Friesland, was a heavy blow to the Davidian sect, and was followed by a severe persecution, which consumed the better part of it. The magistrates of Delph, learning that assemblies of anabaptists were held day and night in their city, gave forth a proclamation, by the crier, that all connected with the anabaptist society, should leave the city in eight days, or suffer death. The leaders of the Davidians, believing that God would never suffer so holy a people to die, or if they were put to death, that they would at once be restored to life, persuaded the more simple not to depart; yet with this caution, that those who were not ready to die at any time, should depart; yet notifying them, that by departing, they would lose a favorable opportunity of making sure of salvation. The consequence was, that some rushed into the present danger, to conquer their spiritual death, by undergoing a death of the body. And David remained in the city with a few of his friends,

to see the end of the affair, which was far different from what he had promised them. Some, who at first departed, repented and returned, choosing to endure the worst, rather than leave that holy church and be unfaithful to God and their friends. The eight days were spent; search was made in all the houses suspected of having anabaptist inmates; and as soon as the officers made the errand known, every one of the sect offered themselves, as promptly as if invited to a wedding. Some, when the officer was retiring without them, called after him, and claimed to have a place with the other prisoners, because bound with them in the bonds of the same faith. This readiness to suffer death excited the admiration of many of the citizens. But the court adjudged them all to death. The men were beheaded, and the women drowned. The crimes for which they were condemned were, a rejection of several popish doctrines, enumerated in the indictment. The government knew no distinction between the different sects of anabaptists, and regarded none in these proceedings. The number executed was about thirty-five. All of them professed to be desirous of the martyrdom.

David George, in a letter, giving a narrative of the affair, says: "Who has ever heard of such a great company, so promptly and eagerly, not enduring, but greedily devouring, death, as a hungry slave snatches a morsel of bread. Nor did this divine courage shine alone in the men, but also in the women and girls.



Nor without important reasons has God given up the flower of his people, to be devoured by the devil, since their death was so precious in his sight. But the number of those to be slain must be filled out. Rev. 4."

Among the thirty-five killed at that time, was David's mother; and because she was of a more honorable family, she was beheaded, and then buried in a monastery. The other women were buried at the place of execution. Others, of the same religion, had been treated in like manner, at Amsterdam, Leyden, and in the episcopate of Munster. So that in these places about an hundred persons had been put to death in two years.

But although, in such a slaughter of his disciples, David's cause began to wane, and himself was driven about from one place to another, he did not despair of his purpose of revolutionizing the world. He next drew up and sent to the parliament of Holland, a long memorial. In it he styles himself the child and servant of God, and the witness of the Lord of hosts. In his name he proposed and advised many things, and especially that they should cease from persecuting his friends, and no more seek to gratify the Roman antichrist, by shedding innocent blood. For the time had come for God to visit a most severe punishment upon the whole country, for their cruelties; and that so much the sooner, because that he himself, like Lot leaving Sodom, under its doom, was now compelled to flee his country. He exposed their cruelty and

ingratitude towards him and his friends, in that they had exercised such cruelties; and that when they knew that he was a peaceable man, not given to exciting tumults, but had always spent his life harmless as a lamb, and by his advice and writings had often prevented contentions, and rendered great favors to the country. But their unrelenting persecutions were a great injury to the country. Furthermore he desired that they would treat with the emperor, for calling a general council, in which liberty might be given to him, of acting not only against the Romanists, but also against the so called evangelicals. He would there irresistibly prove, that both parties had lost the light of true wisdom, and the power of truth, and had seduced the government, and were leading all in a straight course to hell. He said that God had raised him up, to spread the truth throughout the world, and vindicate it from all the impostures of false prophets, and deliver the world from the violence of antichrist, and restore the reign of righteousness and mercy. For when he shall get the prince of this whole world, that is the old man, under feet, he will have nothing to fear from all his members, that is, the wise and the powerful of the earth. For then God will put forth his power through him and his friends, and their words and works; and then all will be smitten with fear, and exclaim, Let us flee; we are ruined; because the Lord has founded this new Zion, and in it the poor of his people will have confidence; and the Lord will

avenge the innocent blood that has been shed upon earth. Let them then beware of those violent counsels, of the scribes and pharisees, whose very breath is slaughter and burning and plunder; and who in this way pollute the earth. The wrath of God is already kindled against the earth. The time has come when wicked princes must be hurled from their thrones, and their places shall be occupied by those that shall sustain righteousness and truth. Against this purpose of God, no wisdom or power of men can avail. For the wrath of God has already gone forth like a tempest, not to return, till it executes God's purpose. The bow of God's anger is bent, and the death-dealing arrow is set to its place, and it is aimed at the wicked and violent rulers of the world; and God will defend the oppressed against the great dragon, red with blood, to wit, the Roman antichrist. And since these things are so, the government can do nothing better than to grant to him and his friends the use of the common air, that they may with their own labor procure an honest living, and retain their own religion. None of his friends would even whisper a word against the other laws, but would be prompt, for all duties and services. And this would be a benefit to the whole world. For the time has come, in which the new Jerusalem must be restored, the temple re-built, and its palaces and spiritual edifices re-constructed. But even this, no powerful prince can hinder. For God can take away the life

of princes, and strike with terror the rulers of the earth. For soon he would show himself in his anger, to be that Lamb from whose face the king, and the princes, and the rich, and the powerful, would hide in dens, and caves, and say to the mountains and the rocks, (that is, to the people hitherto persecuted,) Fall on us. Then it would be a great advantage to the rulers, if they have in their jurisdiction, some of these mountains, under whose shield they may hide. These and such like things, collected from the Psalms and the prophets, made a great impression on some of the senators. For they feared, lest he had a secret army of anabaptists, on which he was relying, that he was able thus to insult the imperial majesty, and the wise men of the whole empire, while in fact, the whole proceeded from his enthusiasm.

The messenger who carried this letter, by some accident fell into the hands of the government of Leyden, to whom he gave the letter, wishing them to show it to the Parliament at Hague; which was done, and the messenger soon after beheaded. About the same time, David sent a letter to the landgrave of Hesse, too long to admit of our inserting here even the substance of it. It appears, that he entertained more hope of aid from him than from other princes. He complained of the abuses of the times, and gave plentiful advice for removing them. And with this letter he also sent another to the emperor, requesting the landgrave to forward it to him. But the special

object of the letters to the landgrave seems to have been, to solicit a safe residence and asylum in his territory. These letters were written in Holland, in 1539. The one to the emperor was entitled, A humble and serious admonition, written by the impulse of the Almighty God, and to be carefully regarded, because it contains the things which make for eternal salvation. The counsellors of the landgrave did not thoroughly understand the Belgic language, in which the letters were written, and they knew less of the author. Yet from the letters, they discovered that he sought an asylum in their dominions. This the prince was little inclined to grant. But he caused the messenger to be informed, that his dominions were open to any who were persecuted for the reformed religion, if they would only give their consent to the Augsburg confession, or show from the word of God, that there was anything in that confession contrary to scripture. But he declined to transmit the letter to the emperor, since it was not his business to prescribe to the emperor and his counsellors how they should govern the empire. But David, by reason of a dream of one of his followers, had conceived high hopes of this correspondence with the emperor, and hence was much displeased at the Landgrave's refusal. Nor was he any better pleased, that he was required to subscribe to the Augsburg confession, as the condition of finding an asylum in Hesse. The name of his messenger was George Ketel, a man of noble

birth. In the same year, some anabaptists in Hesse, who had been cast into prison, petitioned the government, that a public debate might be held, in which some of their distinguished men might be allowed to defend their doctrine; and offered, that if they were convinced of their error, they would yield and come into their opinion and ecclesiastical connection, on their hands and feet. The landgrave granted their request, and some of the more skilled of the anabaptists were called, from Strasburg, to carry on the disputation. But in the disputation, the Hoffmanians made the discovery that some of their doctrines could not easily be defended, and asked for further time to prepare for the defence. This favor, Martin Bucer, conducting the controversy on the other side, with great kindness granted; and the debate was at length pursued, to such effect, that most of the anabaptist party renounced their errors. The history of the transaction was then written, and afterwards sent to all anabaptist teachers and people; and the Hoffmanians were more ready to yield their ground, from the fact, that they had been often disappointed in the result of their prophets' predictions. Almost every year some new prophet had come up, promising restitution and glorious times, and drawing disciples after him, and forming new sects; and this had brought the anabaptists into many conflicting sects and opinions, and tended to destroy the confidence of the more considerate ones in the whole scheme. Then the

wise and conciliatory course which Martin Bucer took, had a most happy effect. With incredible zeal and incomparable dexterity, and industry, coupled with modesty, fairness, and condescension, he restored many from the error of their ways. When there was any hope of recovering any, he conceded to them all that he could with truth. He conceded, that he and his fellow reformers had in the beginning of their work, labored to purify the churches from the leaven of popish errors, not always with that thoroughness, which the example of the apostolic and primitive church required. For, as the Israelites, after their captivity, which came upon them for profaning the worship of God, and polluting the doctrine of the scripture, not only restored the visible temple and the worship, according to its original model, but also made a public confession of the impiety and the crimes before committed, and renewed the broken covenant with God, and bound themselves by an oath, to keep it so; he and his friends had taught, not only that superstitious forms of worship should be excluded from the churches, and the doctrines and rites of the New Testament restored, but that there should also be made before the whole church, a real expression of abhorrence of past impieties, and a confession of faith and obedience to Christ; and since all who had been baptised under papacy, were ignorant of the use and meaning of baptism, because it had been administered in a foreign language, and the doctrine of baptism,



and the rite itself, had been corrupted, we ought to admit to the Lord's supper none but those, who should be first well instructed in the true religion, and given their name to Christ and his church, and professed a true faith, and a purpose to render pure worship to God, and obedience to his church. He ingenuously confessed, that no small offence had been offered to the anabaptist brethren, in that certain necessary parts of the ministry, had not as yet been restored, to wit, the use of private admonitions of delinquents, and compulsion of the refractory and openly wicked; also the practice of restoring those who confess and repent of their sins, and also that of excommunicating those obstinately persevering in impenitence, and despising the judgment of the church; also the withdrawing from those excommunicated, and the like. But though in the neglect of these things, and in other defects, he and his friends had been in fault in many places hitherto, and in that had given to the anabaptist brethren no small occasion of offence, this offence did not amount to a just cause for separating from all the churches, in a good degree reformed after the rule of the gospel, and for constituting new churches. Much less did it justify the propagation of false doctrines, by those new churches. He said these things, however, not to reproach or disturb the feelings of the brethren, but rather to show, that there was no sufficient cause for separation, and to restore union. This moderation and condescension had a

healing effect, so that not only the greater part of the sect united with the church at Strasburg, but that even the author of the sect, Melchior Hoffman, retracted some of his most offensive doctrines, which he had before maintained with great vehemence. His retraction was as follows :

“ Since, by a conference with his brethren, he had now learned, that what he had hitherto affirmed, to wit, that infant baptism was instituted by Nicolaus, a Roman pontiff, was false, and taken from false histories, and he was now satisfied, that from ecclesiastical histories worthy of credit, and the most ancient writers, such as Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, and others, that infant baptism was in use in the time of the apostle, he could not, on account of the pure use of this rite, withdraw from the communion, and break the unity of the church of Strasburg ; but would freely offer his infants, if he should have any, to be baptised in churches of this kind. And he also earnestly besought all his friends, that they should not object to the doing of that thing. As to the doctrine, that sins voluntarily committed by the renewed, can have no forgiveness, he confessed, that he understood, from the admonition given to brethren and others, in the scriptures, that sins voluntarily committed, even by distinguished members of the church, were sometimes remitted, to the penitent, as in case of David’s adultery and murder, Peter’s denial of Christ, joined with perjury, and the incest of the Corinthian. As to the

Valentinian doctrine of the incarnation, though he had more difficulties in retracting it, perhaps because he had not borrowed it from the other anabaptists, but had himself excogitated it, and had spent much labor in propagating it, and had obtruded it upon the world in many books, as an oracle from heaven, yet he confessed, that he erred in maintaining, that there was only one nature in Christ. For Christ was no less man than God. And since the ministers of the church at Strasburg allowed themselves to be satisfied with this confession, that Christ was no less real man than real God, and this mystery exceeded the comprehension of the human mind, he desired all his brethren to omit all discussion of matters beyond this point in this mystery, and subscribe and freely subscribe to this true confession; and lastly, though he had impugned the doctrines of Luther and Zwingle, touching predestination and free will, both in his books and in the disputation, held at Strasburg in 1533, he never believed, that man in his own strength, and without the special grace of Christ, could either begin or work true righteousness. Wherefore, if he had, either by word or writing, ever taught anything seemingly contrary, he desired that it might be interpreted according to this confession; and he desired his friends to follow him in using that moderation, which might tend to heal rather than continue that unhappy division in the church; and that so much the more, because the ministers of the church had

promised to use all diligence, to remedy existing defects."

Though there were some of the sect who denounced as for an apostacy, this transaction, and fell off to the Hutterian, the Schweitzeranean, and Mennonite parties of anabaptists, or remained as neutrals and independent of all churches, yet by reason of the moderation and labor of Bucer, Capito, and others, the Hoffmanian sect, after that time, lost its original strength. But its name, after awhile, became everywhere extinct. And Calvin did a faithful service for the church, toward those anabaptists of Strasburg, that used the French language, in recalling them from error, and reducing them to a union with the church. And this he did the more easily, because the French church in that city had been constituted and built up, more especially by his ministry, and had taken its form of discipline from him. Among those who used the French language, was John Stordene. He died, and his widow, Ideletta de Bure, or Vanburen, at the suggestion of Bucer, Calvin married.

We now return to the case of David George. He had constantly fed his people with magnificent promises. But the event had falsified them all. Contrary to his predictions, published in his books, the Batenburgians continued to defend their doctrine, and to persecute him and his; and the Hoffmanians of Strasburg, and the Mennonites, fiercely opposed him; and even the remnants of the Munsterians deserted him.

And then the best and chief of his own followers, on whom his hopes had been placed for revolutionizing the world, had been taken from him by capital punishments, and he had received from the landgrave of Hesse, a very different letter from what he had expected; and his affairs now began to be reduced to straits. The offerings of enthusiastic friends had ceased; the want of money began to be felt. And to meet such an emergency, he sent letters to his friends here and there, deploring the hardness of the times, that truth and piety were dishonored and despised, that he was almost forced to beg his bread, though formerly his wisdom had been in request and honored with many gifts, as was Solomon's, when the queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear it. His leading friends labored diligently to retrieve his affairs, and their unhappy diligence effected so much, as to seduce to his interests some rich families, who not only supplied his wants, but threw their whole property into his possession. He left to them the use and control of the goods, except that he used and dispensed what he would, as he had occasion. But the deceitfulness of riches choked the word, and smothered his prayers. He now relaxed the austerity of his life, by which he had acquired such an influence. And as he receded from his severe regimen, so he increased in petulance and arrogance, multiplying wives, and falling into other licentious practices, to the great scandal of his simple fol-

lowers, and the reproach from his opponents. It begun to be whispered among his friends, that by this increase of riches, he had gained the object of his enterprize. This was in 1540. Exulting in his success, he formed the purpose of publishing a great book of "Mirabillia," or Wonders. And by this book, he hoped to accomplish that universal revolution, which he had failed to accomplish by other means. He was a man of small learning, but of great self esteem, and so thought, that everything which he wrote or spoke must be admired, and that all his thoughts were pearls; and all his followers were ignorant, both of ecclesiastical and of political affairs; and if any of them had been more learned, he had fascinated them with his pretences to superior sanctity, and by urging an implicit faith. Wherefore, when he applauded himself, he had those around him that were ever ready to echo his praise. He even reproached his hearers for not applauding him, vented grave suspicions and complaints against them, when they would not do it. And thus the man, originally self conceited above measure, was, by the help of his friends, lifted above himself, in self esteem, and intoxicated with the vision of the world revolutionized and re-produced, by his power. And in his *Mirabillia*, he ventured to promise his friends, that all kings, emperors, princes, divines, and counsellors, would read his book, and, smitten with astonishment, would exclaim, Lo, this is our God, and he will save us, and we will

be glad and rejoice in his salvation. And after he had published it, he waited in expectation for kings to come to him, and surrender their all to him, according to the prophecy—The labor of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia, shall come over unto thee—And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.

But while he was wholly employed in getting out his book of *Mirabillia*, the emperor had appointed six men to meet in conference at Ratisbon, to draw up articles, with the hope of uniting the church. But David had taught, that there could be no solid union among those contending about religion, without the guidance of his spirit of wisdom. And to make his word good, he determined to send some of his chief men, to the conference. And he prepared a letter to be offered to the conference, full of glorification, over the magnificent things which had been revealed to him, and had been done by him, and applying to himself the scripture prophecies of Christ, and telling the conference, that nothing could be determined from the scriptures in settling controversies, without the Lamb to open the book, and loose the seals, and that Lamb is Christ David; and setting forth at large his own pretensions, to be received as the Christ, the promised Son of God. The messenger and bearer of this letter was George Ketel. He set out on foot from Brabant on a laborious and perilous journey, being but a youth, and alone, except that he was accompa-



nied by one learned in Latin, to act as an interpreter. On his journey, he met Bucer, and enquired of him, the state of religion, and learned that the hoped for union was already denounced and hindered, by the bishops and some of the princes; and the matter had been referred to the judgment of the pope and a general council. But George had been instructed, that if he should learn that the union was not in progress, he should keep to himself the letter, and act upon his own discretion, in the best manner for promoting the design of his mission. And he, ignorant of ecclesiastical affairs, and vain of his ample commission, and wishing not to return without some fruit of his journey, told Bucer, that in Lower Germany, God had raised up a man who, endowed with wonderful wisdom and holiness, was preaching repentance and reformation, with great success, and with no mixture of false doctrine. And he told him, what and how great things God had done, by his ministry—what a holy people he had formed. In short, he set forth the prophet David, as some superhuman man, sent to this world from heaven, adorned with every virtue, as an apostle of Christ. He sought nothing but the glory of Christ, and the building of his kingdom. Such a man, in his opinion, had never before been upon the earth. And the rulers, if they had a desire to promote religion, would at once call him to the court of the empire. But Bucer, in his kindness, modesty, and prudence, seemed not at once to reject this dec-

laration and advice of George, but appeared pleased to hear such news; and said that nothing could be more grateful, than to learn that God had sent us men more gifted than all that ever appeared before. For the church in these times had need of such men, against her cunning and powerful adversaries. But George had need to be cautious, lest, taken with a specious appearance of piety, and sanctity, he should approve of things in that man, which are really to be condemned. For it was no new thing, but common to all ages, that satan and his ministers transform themselves into angels of light; and under the pretext of promoting religion, corrupt sound doctrine, and excite in men wild opinions, and insane violence. Bucer said that he was not displeased to hear it told, that a greater light was now to be unfolded upon the world, but he wished to be sure, that it was the light of truth. But George was not aware of the danger of error, and had no other way to distinguish between true and false religion, than that which the man had who was born blind, and whose eyes Christ had opened. He had been reared in the vices of a court, and by the aid of the new prophet he had been reformed from the grosser vices, and attached a great importance to the change, and had great confidence in the author of it, and thence inferred, that his prophet could teach no error, and maintained that he proposed the bare, open, irrefragable truth, with such evidence and power, that all the

more sound minds were convinced and transformed. And yet he added, that he is not learned in languages and science, and Bucer must be careful, lest, on account of this ignorance, he despise the holy spirit that speaks through him; as did the scribes and pharisees, who could approve of nothing, but what was done by their sort of men, and so were the deadly enemies of all who had been sent from God.

After such like discourses, the two separated. But Bucer first wrote and sent a letter to David, conveying the same ideas, and adding, that since that man of whom George had borne such ample testimony, was not confined by a ministry to a particular church, as he was himself, he desired that he would take a journey to Strasburg, that there might be a friendly conference between them, touching what is needful to restore the gospel doctrine. For he would freely admit and promote, whatever he could be convinced was for the edification of the church, and that, let others say and do what they will. George had testified in general, concerning a certain man, divinely raised up, whose name he did not give, because he knew it would be known and abominable to the Hoffmanians, lately returned to the church at Strasburg. Yet he gave to Bucer, two printed books, the one of which was upon mortification, and the other upon charity. These were among David's more sound productions, containing nothing of his horrid doctrines. But after George returned, and David saw from his own nar-

rative and from Bucer's letter, that he had accomplished nothing answering to his great expectations, he commanded George and his companion to tell no one of the purpose and event of his journey. This was in 1541.

The next year he completed the publication of his great book, the *Mirabillia*. And to raise expectation he had in the same year published a full table of contents, and sent it abroad in advance of the work; and so he created a great desire in the public mind for a reading of the book. In the meantime, while the book was coming from the press, there was brought to him a book, written by Menno, in which, after explaining and defending the doctrines of the anabaptists, he undertook a refutation of the opinions of other sects, which he called the sects of perdition. In that book Menno expressly named no sect; yet David considered it an attack upon him, and at once wrote him a letter, declaring war, couched in these terms:

“Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Menno, put on the breastplate, and draw the sword, take the shield and lance. For I have determined to enter the combat with you.” The substance of the letter was, that Menno had taught that he, David, was not sent of God, and that he was a minister of the letter, which killeth, but not of the spirit, which giveth life. Then he proposes to Menno some questions to be discussed, such as, Who had sent him, and how he was sent?

what proofs he had of his ministry? and what is the way, which leads to eternal life, and what to hell? what will the traveler meet in the way? what will be done there? and what the fruits of it? and what the end? From Menno's answer to these, he expected to expose his ignorance of divine things; and because God and his spirit was with him, and supplied him with an efficacious doctrine, he was ready to face any doctrine in this world, for all who opposed him were contending with the spirit of God. And so he warned Menno, to abstain from a conflict with his heavenly doctrine, unless he wished to call down the wrath of God upon himself and his party.

Menno replied with bitterness, and declared himself ready for a battle, not carnal, but spiritual. Hitherto he had stood erect in battle, against all his antagonists, and had prevailed, since in all his wars he had used not his own, but God's armor, to wit, the doctrine of the gospel. He had made this kind of armor and battle as familiar as to eat bread. But this armor David had long ago rejected, as obsolete, and substituted in its place, his phantasms, and his rhetorisms, and his philosophy, and other artifices and illusions of satan. And he was justly to be esteemed the antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the false prophet, the murderer of souls, the deceiver, the despiser of heavenly truth, and of the instructions of Christ. He was therefore astonished at the proud bearing of David's letter—that after so many blasphem-

mous articles, sent here and there, and propagated through so many years, instead of expressing his repentance in this letter, he should now offer to defend his blasphemies. It was a proof of a diabolic pride and anti-christian madness; that he dared to prefer his dreams, phantasms, enthusiasms, rhetorisms, and other magic illusions, to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit; that such a worm of the dunghill—ashes—a shadow—should dare to place his office above that of Jesus Christ, and his doctrine above that of the apostles; that in the meantime he lived in the most base licentiousness; and both he and his followers inclined to the rites and customs of papists, Lutherans, and Zuinglians; partaking of their sacred things, nor avoiding their festivities at weddings, and funerals; but in all things conforming to their customs. He also condemned the practice of polygamy and the other licentious customs sustained by David, and accused him of a life as corrupt as his doctrines, while in his dress and style of living, he exhibited much luxury and pride. When therefore he dared to claim to himself the honor due to the son of God, and hold as obsolete the doctrine of Christ, and his own to be perfect and everlasting; and since he had preferred his anti-christian ministry, to the office and ministry of Christ, and then under a pretext of feigned humility, covering the pride of Lucifer, and under pretence of promoting perfection, chastity, and other virtues, he had promoted various crimes, such as fornication,

adultery, incest ; and, lastly, since after the manner of the Lutherans and papists, he had changed the form and state of the christian life, into a state plainly worldly, no doubt remained, but that he would shortly receive from God, who will not give his glory to another, such a reward, as did John Buckold, king of Munster, and others, who before him had claimed the honor due to God. He would therefore cease to write to him, and would not waste paper and ink upon him. Nor would he hereafter read anything from his pen, until he should publish, that he had repented, and condemned and execrated his impious doctrine.

Such a severe answer from Menno disturbed David not a little. But lest by his silence he should seem to acknowledge such atrocious crimes, charged upon him, or not be able to digest the charges, he immediately wrote a new letter, addressed not to Menno, but to his followers, in which he complains of Menno's bitter spirit ; and that he had refused to have with him a friendly debate ; and in the place of an answer to certain questions proposed, he had returned thunderbolts and anathemas ; and that without any previous admonition or conviction of error, according to the rule of the gospel, which he boasts as his armor. But from this, it is evident, that he is bare of armor. And while he betrays his nudity, and retreats from the arena, he covers his flight, and refuses all collation of opinions. And then after the manner of the cun-



ning asp, having infixed his deadly poison, and given birth to atrocious falsehoods, he covers his ears ; so as not to hear the refutation of his petulance, and scurrility. They all who had been his followers, had been basely deceived by his feigned and pharisaic appearance of corporeal virtues. And himself, although he had been in their sight as a publican and a great sinner, yet the oil and wine prepared for languishing souls, was not with Menno. He declared himself ready to meet Menno, and unanswerably show, that he had no substantial knowledge of the things which he taught ; and that he must perish for his arrogance and temerity, unless he repent ; and if they despised his protest, and admonition, and followed in the footsteps of their teacher, he should be innocent of their sin and ruin.

These letters passed upon both sides, in 1543. The letter of David to the Mennonite teachers, was dated in East Friesland, in the month of May. But they followed the footsteps of their teacher, and made no answer to David. In the meantime, the Davidians daily increased, by desertions from the Mennonites, either because they were taken with that appearance of prudence and modesty, which he imposed upon them, or because the Davidians concealed the grosser features of their doctrine, and compelled none to expose themselves to persecution, by leaving the churches. But the Mennonites attributed to them this motive, and denounced them on account of an

excessive license to the flesh, granted by the Davidians ; and thus becoming recreant to the true religion. But some who came over in this desertion, insisted that David should again invite Menno to a debate, which they thought he would now undertake, for the sake of recovering the deserters. He consented, and Menno yielded to the request. And the debate was appointed to take place in 1546, in Lubec, in the open field, without the city. But a controversy arose about the articles to be discussed, and the modes of procedure ; and a disagreement here prevented the debate.

Menno was born in West Friesland, and having made some proficiency in learning, was ordained a priest of the Romish church, in the bishoprick of Utrecht, and had the charge of a church in Witmasum, near Bolswert. About the year 1536, Ubbo and Theodoric Philippi seceded from the Hoffmanians, by whom they had been made bishops two or three years before, and constituted a new church out of the relics of the Munsterians. And they persuaded Menno to resign his popish priesthood, and be made a bishop of the new faction. He assumed the office with promptitude and zeal, and performed it with energy, constancy, great labor and sacrifice, and not without great success. For by his misapplied diligence, and that of his associates, he filled Friesland and the Low countries and the regions of the Baltic with anabaptist doctrines. The court of Brabant

raised a severe persecution against them, continued through more than thirty years; in which a vast number was destroyed, by the halter, by the sword, by drowning, and by fire; and by this cruelty their numbers were increased, rather than diminished. Besides the doctrines of anabaptism and the Valentinian notion of the incarnation of Christ, they differed not so much from the reformed churches. But they differed more in customs and practice. After the example of the Donatists, they acknowledged none as churches that did not maintain a severity of discipline. Hence they avoided and anathematised all the reformed churches, and kept clear from all assemblies but their own, whether for religious or secular purposes; and avoided feasts at weddings, or baptisms, or funerals. They regarded these and such like customs as heathenish.

In the year 1543, a most noble, learned, and pious man, a Baron of Poland, by the name of John A'Lasco, come into the Low countries. He had been a Romish bishop, in Hungary. But he had embraced the doctrines of Zuingle, from the heart, and so of course renounced his ecclesiastical offices, and emoluments. He came into East Friesland, married a wife of humble fortune, and settled there. But by the concurrence by the prince, nobility and preachers, he was elected superintendant of the churches in that country. He accepted the office, and gave himself wholly to the work of clearing it from the evils and

sects, which had been concentrated there. And he enlisted the endeavors of the ministry, concurrent with his own, to bring back the wandering to the church. And with the advice and sanction of the ministers and the prince, he invited Menno to a public debate. Yet the result did not wholly answer his expectation, and diligence, and labor. For Menno, by a specious appearance of piety, more than by his arguments, made an impression on some of the citizens. Yet the superintendant was not discouraged, and purposed to try the same with those suspected of Davidism; and having invited some of the most substantial of the leaders of that sect into a meeting house, he set forth the sum of the doctrine of his church, and for several days debated with them; and after much discourse on both sides, he drew up a form of doctrines, to which the Davidians consented, with this reserve, that in subscribing to these doctrines, they judged nothing for David, but for themselves alone; they acknowledged these things as true, and were willing to defend them. The difference of vocation remained in controversy. They still held that David had a call to an apostolic office, in which he could not err. The preachers were willing to put him in the work of common preachers, provided he would consent to the same doctrines, and show the same qualifications with them. These transactions gave rise, to the following letter, from John A Lasco to David.

“Dear Brother, David George, minister of the divine word—Grace to you, and peace from Christ Jesus, one with the father and the Holy Spirit, one with us, and brother to us, in the flesh, real God and man, the mediator, who as the chief corner stone, connects the old with the new, and makes both one in himself, that he may possess his kingdom, given to him from eternity, by the father; to him be praise and glory, forever, Amen. Since we have been put into the ministry of him, who through life is Lord of all, yet bestows himself wholly upon us, that through us he may glorify his kingdom—and he testifies the same that he came to us for this purpose; that he might feed not only the sheep that had been already collected into his fold, but that he might join others with them—we have thought that it pertained to our office, to do what we can, to heal existing divisions and promote unity in the church. And hence, as soon as we were called to the ministry of this church, we, with the advice of our colleagues, determined to invite to a friendly conference those who did not wholly approve of our doctrine. Not that we claimed to have the key of knowledge, but because it interested us to secure, as far as might be, an agreement in doctrine through all the churches committed to us; of doctrine, I say; not of our doctrine, (for we would not teach of ourselves,) but of sound doctrine, which either by us or by any others may be confirmed by the word of God. And though we are aware, that this our purpose will

be despised and calumniated by others, we will not on that account abandon that which we think belongs so properly to our office ; but will nevertheless seek a free and fraternal conference with all, if by any means we can secure an agreement of doctrine, in our churches. We are prepared to prove our doctrines, by the word of God, or abandon them when we find that they cannot be so proved. When we held a conference with your friends, marvelous things were here reported, both among the people, and the magistrates. Some were reluctant to have us confer with your friends. For they said that it was your custom, and that of your friends, not to state your whole doctrine. But we hesitated not, but determined to try. We therefore conferred with your friends ; we laid open to them the sum of our doctrine, with all possible clearness, and desired them to deal in the same candor, and either approve or disprove our doctrine. We made the gospel the judge of all controversies, because it is to judge all men at the last day. Your friends accepted the condition ; much discourse was had upon both sides, till they, by the grace of God, unanimously subscribed to our doctrine, except that they claimed for you a peculiar vocation, above other ministers ; and you yourself appeared to claim it. But we believe in only one kind of ministers, since the apostles ; though in the same order of ministers some may excel others in gifts and piety. So John was called more than a prophet,

when yet he had only a prophet's vocation. So also Paul, though exceeding other apostles in labor and success, yet claimed to be only an apostle—yea, and in some respects the very least of the apostles; and put a difference between those who laid the foundations and those who built upon them; so that those who come into the ministry, after the foundation is once laid, may understand that they cannot go beyond the limits of the foundation, and much less build anything foreign upon it, or from it after another model."

"To be brief, we desire of you that you would either prove this peculiar vocation, which you claim from the scriptures, or wholly abandon the claim, so that the church may be no longer divided. If you have gifts superior to others, we do not envy them, but rather desire that they may be employed, in unity with the church of Christ, hitherto sufficiently disturbed by those claiming a peculiar vocation. To this claim we owe all the tyranny of the pope, and Mahomet; to this also all the madness of the Munsterians; to say nothing of Montanus, who boasted that the Holy Spirit was embodied in him. Wherefore, my father, I beseech thee, by Jesus Christ, that you would well consider what you do. These are the last times, in which the roaring lion is seeking whom he may devour, and transforms himself into an angel of light, that he may draw after him all who are unwilling to receive the truth of the gospel. We doubt



not, but you will take in good part this admonition, as it proceeds from sincere regard for you. And if you are moved by the spirit of God, he will no doubt make it known to you that that is the fact. We therefore expect from you the proof, out of the word of God, that you have this peculiar vocation, which we wish you to put forth in plain words, and not in allegories. Farewell. The Lord preserve you, and direct us all to the glory of his holy name, and the edification of his church.

JOHN A LASCO,  
Minister of Jesus Christ,  
In his gospel to the East Frieslanders.

February, 1544."

This letter shows the character of the author's mind, and his zeal in the cause of christian union, united with great prudence and gentleness. David read the letter, and sent an answer, in which he said, that he was very much delighted with what that letter and his own friends had informed him; and that he had thence conceived the hope, that God, by a future friendly conference, would shorten the days of his exile and affliction. Yet, as he was wont, he insolently boasted of his own excellence of spirit, and of the wonderful light of truth revealed to him. But as to the question proposed, he said that he for his part could answer nothing; that the matter was too deep and precious to be so easily proposed to the under-

standing of any one, not prepared to understand it. Such things were to be handled by them with great caution and prudence, that they must, in the first place, be brought to hunger and thirst for them. Before the first letter of John A Lasco came to David, he, having had the report of the conference from his friends, had written to A Lasco. To this letter he sent the following answer :

“Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, Brother David—I have lately received your letter, my brother, in which you write to me, that you are pleased that I have had a friendly conference with your friends upon religion ; and you also confess that, moved by this our kindness, you ought freely to open your mind to me, and that you love me not less than yourself, since you discover in me the same desire of truth which you claim yourself to have ; and indeed, of that truth which consists not alone of historical knowledge, but of that which is impressed upon the mind by the spirit, and gives to us a clear proof of itself, the same spirit causing us to produce fruits, worthy of that known truth. You add, moreover, that we do not despise you because you are unlearned in languages, but that we hold you as a brother, since you have a like desire of knowing and defending the truth, especially since true charity is not to be estimated by its eloquence and adorning of words, nor by any garniture of external things, but from the internal exercise of the spirit. Lastly, you desire to confer freely

with me, as I have with your friends, that it may appear which of us has the more full knowledge of the truth. You farther desire to know, what we think of God, the Father and the Son, that we should make it more certain what we approve or disapprove in your views of this subject; or if we require anything farther in your writings, that we would also let you know, that you may open your mind the more fully. You also refer us to your book of *Mirabillia*, that we may find in it and examine the sum of your whole doctrine; and if we find you to excel us in the knowledge of the truth, that we would allow you to lead us up to greater knowledge of it; and you promise that you will do the same, that is, that you will by all means follow us if we excel you. Also, you constantly affirm that you have the truth, which now ought to be brought forth to the light, at which fact you think we ought rather to rejoice than be offended."

The above are the words of John A'Lasco. The other part of the letter, in which he replied to David's letter, was, in substance, that since he had a free conference with David's friends, and now desired to retain them in ecclesiastical connection, if they would only heartily consent to the doctrines of the reformed churches, or would point out, in the light of scripture, any errors in their creed. He heartily responded to David's expressions of love, as far as he acknowledged in him a desire of truth; yea, he did not wish to be loved by him, or any other man, except in the name

of Christ; nor did he wish them to love him in anything but gifts and graces which Christ had conferred, if such could be found in him. So then, says he, my David, I desire most freely to acknowledge thee as a brother, and to be so acknowledged by thee; and I desire nothing more, than that in rendering a reason of our doctrine and faith, we may give entire satisfaction to all who are willing to acknowledge our ministry; and that, laying aside all human passions, we may with one heart and mouth declare the true knowledge of God. For we are prepared to receive instruction from any who can teach us, but from no other source than the scriptures. For these Paul makes to be the foundation of that church which is built upon Christ, as its chief corner stone, and anathematises whatever does not rest on this foundation, even though taught by an angel from heaven. But from what we have gathered from your writings, and your friends, we are not able to make out the proof of that new and peculiar kind of vocation which you claim for yourself, and in respect to which you say you are not, and you cannot be, deceived. The reasons why, we gave in our first letter. It also appears too arrogant, that you affirm, that with you is the truth, if we take these words as they mean. We say truly, that the truth is with us, so far as Christ lives and breathes in us by his spirit. But Christ does not live in us, unless we are upon the same side with the truth."

But it would carry us beyond our design, to give the details of this discussion. John A Laseo presented at length his objections to David's positions, and David replied at length. Out of this controversy a persecution arose against the Davidians, although the immediate occasion of it came from another source. For Cornelius, of Leyden, the prince of the Batenburgians, was at this time arrested, having been betrayed by his own party, and convicted of many crimes, perpetrated under pretext of religion, in the city of Utrecht. And to screen himself, he betrayed many others, not of his own sect, through all that region, and accused them of anabaptism. Among the rest, he accused George Ketel, of having been rebaptized, and having aided the cause of David. Being questioned upon the subject, Ketel confessed the whole ; and after enduring great tortures, he revealed the names of some of the Davidians, in East Friesland. But by his giving these names, rather than of those dwelling in other jurisdictions, it turned out as he hoped, that they escaped without any capital punishments. But since the court bore ill will to that county, because many fugitives fleeing from them had been received there, they sought cause from the testimony of this prisoner, of accusing the magistrates of that county of doing damage to divine and human majesty. They sent letters by an ambassador, demanding of the countess and all the nobility, that all the Mennonites, Davidians, and others, and even John

A Lasco and the reformed preachers, should be expelled. And hence it happened, that some either accused or suspected of being Davidians, and who were unwilling to condemn David's doctrine, were expelled. In this persecution, some noble families were involved, and stripped of the possessions which they held in Brabant, and would have suffered most cruel deaths, if they had not fled. A little before, a certain man, burning with zeal for increasing the Davidians, and learned in Greek and Latin, began to translate the "Mirabilia" into Latin, that such a treasure of wisdom might be given to other nations, and especially the French. And while engaged upon the work, he was smitten with such admiration and astonishment, that he conceived a great hope, that by means of what he had already translated, to wit, the first thirty chapters of the first book, he should be able to draw over to the sect, Philip Melancthon, his former teacher, and then through him the whole of Germany. Full of this hope, he commenced a journey to Wittemburg, in company with a faithful servant, taking with him the Book of Wonders, together with the translation of the thirty chapters. But when he entered Wittemburg, and had saluted Melancthon, after hearing his lecture, he began to inquire of him, whether he had heard of the great light which had arisen in Lower Germany. Melancthon answered, that not without great grief, he had learned, that through all those countries, besides the popish idola-

try, every kind of monstrous sect is rife, and that some of them teach that the devil is nothing but an empty name. The translator said that he confessed that the devil was a spirit, impelling to evil. Melanchton replied, if he is a spirit, he acts by himself, and has an existence. When the translator added some absurd things, Melanchton replied, that his doctrine was fanatical, and if it should appear that he had come to Wittenburg to scatter the seeds of it, he would inform the magistrates, and have him imprisoned. The translator had hopes of success, now greater than before. But after hearing the threats of Melanchton, he began to hesitate, and tremble, and said not another word in defence of his doctrine, but pretended that he was not in earnest, and meant no such thing—that excepting with himself, who was the Corypheus of the city, he had had conversation with no one there. After the conversation was finished, our translator went straight to the inn, paid his bill, and dismissed his servant, and his Book of Wonders, and other lucubrations. For he feared that his books would bring him into danger. For if any should read these, there would be no way for him to escape. He tarried there long enough afterwards, to avert suspicion, and then returned whence he had come.

When, therefore, David saw that all his attempts were abortive, that Melanchton had not been gained to his communion, and that by the consent of John A Lasco, all suspected of Davidism had been expelled



from East Friesland, he commanded, both by word and writing, all his friends to abstain from teaching his doctrine to others; because the times were evil, in which it became the wise to be silent. But this command was perhaps dictated, not so much by his religion, as by his fears, since now he could no longer skulk about in secret assemblies. Yet this advice, contrary as it was to his previous principles, was an advantage to his deluded followers. For it saved many of them from exposing themselves to capital punishments. And it opened the way for many to be recovered back to the truth.

He now absconded, changed his name to John A. Bruck, put on a dress and whole appearance different from what he had worn before, took with him the ample fortune which he had gathered from his disciples, and under this disguise he took up his residence in the city of Basle. Persecution was then raging in the low countries, and he pretended to be one of the poor exiled protestants, fleeing from the storms of papal wrath, and to have changed his residence, purely out of regard to the cause of Christ. The stratagem succeeded. Both the magistrates and people had great sympathy for such exiles; and he found a quiet resting place, and gathered around him many of his disciples, who kept the secret, and had private communion with him, while outwardly they appeared to sympathize with the reformed churches. He swore allegiance to the government, directly in face of all

his principles. He attended church with great regularity and devoutness. He insinuated himself into the good graces of the citizens, by many offices of kindness, by a liberal style of living, and hospitality, and by a prudent and winning conversation, and by many acts of charity to the poor.

Yet, while he outwardly maintained such a commendable appearance, he secretly cherished his fanatical schemes. When he attended church, he often heard the preachers denounce both his principles and character. And what the preachers said, was having the effect to open the eyes of his friends. And he had occasion for all his skill and industry, to retain them. This labor brought from him several tracts, which were printed for circulation among his friends there, and in other places. Soon a new embarrassment came up. He and his friends found it needful to avoid all appearance of singular views and principles. But their own principles were opposed to marriage, yet they had children of a marriageable age, and had occasion to procure their marriage, to avoid suspicion. The prophet's principles were found flexible, again, and he cunningly contrived marriages among them, though not without giving offence to some of his conscientious followers. One of his sectaries, who had been at first drawn in by David's parade of rare piety and devotion, had joined the sect, though without being able to approve of all his doctrines. He had for a long time rendered faithful services to the cause. But

at length he saw, with grief, that that first appearance of piety was but a mere pretence; that he had been entangled and deceived. He now, by words and letters, faithfully but modestly, reproved and admonished his friends of their danger. In this way he incurred a deadly hatred from the whole party; and letters were written to all the sect, far and near, to admonish them to beware of this monitor, and avoid his influence as a deadly poison. So this man, at first miserably deceived, and afterwards more miserably led astray, was now put in a way to be recovered out of the snare of the devil. And now he devoted himself entirely to the work of opening the eyes of others of the sect. He went from province to province, visited and labored with individuals, refuting the errors of their books, and subjected himself to great danger and expense, and had great success in his work.

But when we come to inspect the private and domestic character of David, we find it an enigma. His seeming of piety, carried into the interior of his family, seems strangely to contrast with his life of rank wickedness. In his early years, he had found it difficult to get the needful amount of sleep, and as old age advanced, this difficulty increased. By reason of an unusual activity of mind, or of the world of cares that pressed upon him, or the disturbing jealousies of women connected with him, (which he called the jealousy of the Holy Spirit,) he was kept in a constantly restless state. Being kept awake most of the

night, he slept late in the morning. As soon as he dressed himself, he took, for his breakfast, some gruel, or the yolk of an egg. And then the teacher of his children led in the younger children, and he and they saluted him with all respect. And then he would dismiss them with some serious admonition. After this, he would apply himself to writing, till eleven o'clock. Then he went into his garden, (a splendid one,) and he wrought for an hour, or took the oversight of the work of others. At twelve he dined, continuing two hours at the table. He ate sparingly, but drank freely. After dinner he slept awhile, and then applied himself either to writing, walking, or cultivating his garden. Sometimes he was accompanied by his familiar friends, and went out to the public houses of the neighboring villages, or upon his farm, which he had three miles from the city. He had in his youthful days practised painting, and was much delighted with the art; and now exercised his mind by sketching the landscapes and scenery of the place, and in teaching his children to do the same. He seemed to resort to this as an exercise to relieve his depression of spirits. He also delighted to mingle in the sports of children, and would join in much laughter, even forgetting a common decorum. He had a hatred of the learned, and especially of those who wore the gown. In prayers, he was apparently serious and earnest, in admonitions and exhortations, pungent, in teaching, pleasant, but without method.

As to writing, whatever came into his mind which he thought worth preserving, while walking, or praying, or reading, or conversing, he would note down, and afterwards write it out. Having written much, he wrote with great rapidity. And he never read over any of his manuscripts, without pen in hand, to add or correct.

There appears to have been something strange in the disease of which he died. Spanheim says that it was no disease, but the power of remorse of conscience, and fear of detection. His son-in-law speaks of the disease as a strange one, and of its baffling the skill and expectations of his physicians, but intimates nothing of his remorse or fear having generated it. The death of his wife occurred in near connection with his own. She had been sick for a half year, confined to her bed. And when she heard that her husband was dangerously sick, her own disease was aggravated. And when he heard it, he poured forth most earnest prayers for her recovery, and said that he had no doubt that she would recover; though her disease the physicians knew to be incurable. She died, and after her death, he inquired of the physicians how she was, and they replied that she was doing well, for her disease had changed. It was agreed among his friends, that it was not best to tell him of the death of his wife. But his older children were unwilling that she should be buried without informing him. For they entertained an idea that his prayers

might restore her to life. Before they told him of her death, his mind wandered somewhat. But when they told him, he was rational again for a short time. All hope of his living was now abandoned. And the intelligence greatly agitated and distressed him, and so much the more, because of the strange nature of the disease of which he died, which seemed to fulfil the predictions of many, who had ventured to declare that so wicked and blasphemous a man, would die some awful kind of death. But he died three days after his wife, August 25, 1556.

For some time before his death, the faith of many of his friends began to falter, and they kindly and modestly admonished him of his errors; and he himself would at times promise, that he would abandon or not defend, or at least not require them to defend, the grossest of his tenets—though he never redeemed his promise. But they conceived the hope, that after his death, the whole of his friends in that vicinity, convinced by [the fact that all his predictions had failed, and also by the strange manner of his death, would open their eyes, and either cease to defend the delusion, or cease to blame those who abandoned it. But the great part—the unconvinced—rejected their labors, and sought to bring upon them the execrations of the whole sect. Hence arose a conflict, concealed of course from the world, for at that time the name and character of David, was not known at Basle; and his own sect in that city were still under disguise.

The contest was carried among the party, by reproaches, treacheries, calumnies, and falsehoods. But while some rejected the admonitions, others listened to them. It so happened, that there was one of the servants of David, who excelled the others in genius and knowledge of the scriptures; and he became, against his will, involved in a contention, where he was required to defend one party, and throw his influence against the other. To this demand he could not yield with a good conscience; since the opposite party had the better cause. Hence arose against him the severe displeasure of one party, and they conspired against him, and violently shut him out of their houses. At this his stomach was somewhat ulcerated. Yet his friends, who had given the pious admonitions to the other party, restrained him, and moderated his resentments for awhile. Yet afterwards he entered the service of another man, who was a man of learning and distinction, and not an anabaptist, and to him he began by degrees to leak out the mysteries of the sect. And this man, after awhile, related to the preachers what he had got from his servant. They followed up the investigations, till they had discovered the whole. This was done while Blesdick, David's son-in-law, was absent from Basle. And the preachers suspended their investigations, waiting his return. When he returned, and found that in his absence, some of his papers had been lent to the preachers, he feared the disclosure which afterwards followed. He



first, through his friends, got his papers, and then went to the preachers, and freely confessed to them, that he had been formerly involved in those errors, though he had before that time abandoned them. They then urged him to declare what his associates and friends now thought. He replied, that he could not testify as to the past or present opinions of others, since they were of age, and able to answer for themselves. They were called up, and questioned, but the preachers could get nothing from them, except that their views were the same as those of the other citizens, nor had they known or approved of any other religion, since they had been in the place. And they subscribed a declaration, that they detested all heresies, including the Davidians. The sect had formerly disallowed this base license of professing a lie, as is shown both by their early books, and the severe punishments which many endured for confessing themselves Davidians. But now they had everywhere become very pliant, communing with any of the churches, denying the name and doctrine of David their idol, and even anathematizing it when required.

One of the preachers, more zealous than the rest, rejected this confession as false, and continued to agitate the subject, till the matter was brought under cognizance of the government. It was urged upon the government, that danger would come upon the state, if they did not arrest that cursed sect. The

servant of David, before named, was called, from the court of a prince, in whose service he was then employed; and he gave his testimony to the facts. He had faithfully served fifteen years in David's family, by instructing his children, and writing for him, and acting as a sort of confidential secretary. And he had even given a great part of his patrimony to the family. But on account of a change in his religious convictions, they had dismissed him, with no reward, but curses. And the like they did, with all who began to swerve from their faith.

By these means, three years after the impostor was dead and buried, all the facts came out. The blasphemies and impostures of the man were detected. By a solemn decree of the senate, his papers and books were burnt by the hangman; his effigy was drawn through the streets, in the hangman's cart, and burnt. His body was disinterred, and carried in its coffin to the place of execution, and burnt to ashes.

Excepting one very peculiar class of the anabaptists, to be noticed in the next chapter, we have now described the different sects that bore that name. And it is worthy of remark, how few of them, by all the efforts that were made, were recovered out of the snare of the devil. The two most moderate and hopeful branches of them were the Mennonites and the Hoffmanians. And of the latter, a goodly number of individuals were recovered by the judicious

efforts of Bucer, Calvin, and others, as will be seen by the account given by Blesdick, which we have followed, page 279 and onward. But by comparing this with the more general statement of the affair, which we have copied from Spanheim, page 233, preserving the variations of circumstances and of dates, it would seem, that though a check was given to the sect by this disputation, and though Hoffman himself was made to profess more moderate views for a time, and though individuals (among whom was the wife of Calvin) were recovered, the sect finally ceased rather by dispersion, than by recovery of any considerable body of them.

As to the Mennonites, they seem to have survived the other sects of anabaptists, and gathered in the fragments of them; and they have perpetuated their existence to this day. And little companies of them may now be found in the Netherlands, and in those parts of this country where the Dutch population prevails. But few of them appear ever to have been recovered to sounder views.

And the Davidians yielded a few, and but a few, converts to evangelical religion. And a similar experience usually attends such rank fanaticisms. They place the mind far from hope and heaven.

## CHAPTER IX.

No man better understood the whole subject of these heresies, than John Calvin. No small part of the eminent services, which he rendered to the church of Christ, consisted in defences against this class of corrupters of the truth. His wife was a convert from anabaptism. Servetus, whose name is a whole vocabulary of reproachful epithets, linked with the name of Calvin, was a prominent leader of a sect of anabaptists. I shall therefore, in giving an account of that branch of the sect called libertines, do little else, than select and translate Calvin's statements, found in two of his tracts, the one entitled *Brevis Instructio adversus Anabapt.*, and the other *Instructio adversus fanaticam et furiosam sectam Libertinorum*.

Speaking of the boundless variety and endless ramifications of this sect, he says, This sect differs from all others, in that it does more than to err in certain things; it is a shoreless sea of stupendous deliriums. And scarcely can a single anabaptist be found, who has not some opinions, differing from those of the rest.

Yet all may be reduced to two principal sects. The one, though full of impious errors, is more easy to be reached and understood, because it makes use of books, as a means of propagating its tenets. So that in controversy with them, we can know in what they agree with us, and in what they differ from us. But the other portion of the sect have a most intricate labyrinth of deliriums, so as to make it a wonder that creatures in human shape could be so void of reason, as to adopt such sentiments, which one would think even the brutes would abhor. This is called the sect of the libertines. They pretend to be so spiritual, that the word of God is no more to them than fables, except when they can so pervert it as to make it seem to support their diabolical sentiments.

In describing this sect, Calvin makes use of the pen of the sacred writers, and says, From the second epistle of Peter, and from Jude's epistle, it appears that there was a sect in their times, who, under a pretext of christianity, seduced the simple to a wicked life, confounding good and evil, and lulling the conscience with vain flatteries, abusing christian liberty, and endeavoring to throw into confusion the whole world, its order, its governments, and even humanity itself. Peter uses these words, But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption. And he says, in what they know, they corrupt themselves. And he com-

pare them to clouds, driven with fierce winds, and wells without water, and says that they speak great swelling words of vanity; that is, they utter themselves in lofty phrase, as if they would transport their hearers above the heavens; and yet attract them to wantonness and fleshly lusts, and subject them to the lowest debasement. And Jude uses language very similar. And whoever thoroughly understands the libertines, and has attentively considered these passages, will readily see, that the spirit of inspiration has here described them. Indeed, says Calvin, I never should well have understood the things here described, unless I had recognized them in these men. But since all have not known them, I will show how these marks belong to them.

And first, as to their great swelling words, you will observe, when you begin to hear them, that you seem to be rapt above the clouds. Their whole discourse is of the spirit; and they make such a use of language, as to make it seem to be a foreign idiom, and to confuse and stupify the hearer, at the first onset. They design not to be understood, nor do they speak what they can understand themselves. But it is their craft, in this way, to cover up the baseness of their doctrine. They so shape their discourse, as to make it seem to convey something too profound for the hearer's comprehension. Thus they excite the admiration of those who have not penetration enough to detect their policy; and by this means they raise a

smoke before the eyes, and steal into the mind, before the abominable nature of their doctrine is discovered. But after this sublime preface has had its effect, they at once fall to the lowest depths, and place man upon a level with the brutes. They take away all restraints from the fear of God, and all sense of right and wrong. And this is the liberty which they promise, while they themselves are the servants of corruption. But of this we will give more in the sequel.

Immediately after the age of the apostles, portentous heresies arose, more absurd than one would suppose the human mind could receive. And the church was vexed by them, till their absurd and horrible nature became manifest. Then they were so abhorred, that for 1200 years no one was found who dared to profess them. And it was reserved for these days, to produce the unhappy men, whom satan has raised up, to reproduce these blasphemies. These errors, in primitive times, came forth by one Cerdo, i. e., a cobbler, who started the idea of two principles, the one good and the other evil, and held that everything in the world, sprung from the proper nature of one or the other of these. He denied the resurrection, because he said, that everything would return to its origin, in one or the other of these two principles. He held that Christ's advent and sufferings were only in the imagination.

After him arose Marcio, much like him. He gave the theory a new form and dress, in order to gain the



credit of its authorship. Almost in the same time, arose the Gnostics, assuming this name, under a pretence of excelling others in knowledge. And orthodox christians they called borborites, to intimate that they were only frogs, proceeding from the mire. They affirmed, that the soul of man is of the proper substance of God—that there are two principles, good and evil—that the souls which, while in the body, keep themselves pure, will return to the substance of the good, and those polluted, will return to the substance of the evil, God. Yet in setting forth these things, they used obscure and difficult language. There was no great difference between them and Valentin and Appelles, except that each added to the theory some words of his own, to gain the credit of being the author. But the sect of the Manichees became more distinguished among the rest, and had a greater multitude of followers, and continued longer, and patched upon itself errors taken from all sources, and so more abounded in false doctrines. And it is therefore fit to take this sect as the medium of comparison. This sect rejected the Old Testament, poured contempt upon the law and the prophets, and accused God of cruelty. They culled from the New Testament what they could turn to their purpose, and rejected the rest. They held that there were two Gods, the respective authors of good and evil, and that there were two souls in man, one from the good God, which was polluted by earthly things, and had

need to be purified, that by degrees it might return to its origin. But the other could not be corrected, but must return to the darkness from which it sprung. But the means which they prescribed for purifying the soul, consisted of nefarious impostures and execrable pollutions, like those of the heresies above named. They held that the souls of all not of their sect, would migrate to brute animals. The sect was divided into three orders or classes. The first consisted of the teachers, who called themselves the blessed ones, and when employed in purifying, were called the purity. And then the learners were divided into two classes—those to whom were revealed the secrets of the school—these were called the elect; and the others who were led along cautiously, preparing to be initiated. And these were called hearers.

Though this is not the place for drawing out the detail of the doctrines of the libertines; we may remark by the way, that in them there is a resurrection of those ancient heresies. But it is in different combinations, so as to make a confused mass of patches, collected from different sources. Yet the libertines have exceeded all their predecessors, in dissoluteness, madness, and impudence. At first they rejected the scriptures outright, and loaded each of the apostles with shameful reproaches, in order to elevate their own authority. They stigmatized Paul as a broken vessel, Peter as a denier of God, John a stupid youth, and Matthew as an usurer. But, after-

wards, they discovered that such blasphemies injured their credit, and that men were horror-stricken at their enormities. And then they spoke with more caution, and said that they by no means rejected the scriptures. They labored to turn the whole scripture into allegories, and distort its sense, turning a horse into a man, and a cloud into a lantern, an art which they took from the Priscillianists, a sect differing from the Manichees only in this particular. As to God and the substance of the soul, they did not teach in precisely the same manner as the Manichees. But what they taught amounted to about the same. This was, that there was one spirit or God, and all other existences they comprehended under the term world; that all creatures are nothing in themselves; that there is nothing in them, but the power of God, that sustains them; that what men have besides this, is either satan, that is, the world, or nothing. But if we follow up their theory, we find it all built upon the dream of the Manichees, which embraces the two principles, except that they find an easier way to make themselves gods. For, instead of the purgations and exorcisms of the Manichees, they had nothing to do, but to shut their eyes to all difference between good and evil, and stupefy their conscience against all fear of hell, and fancy themselves more pure than the angels. All that christians believe of the resurrection and eternal life, is to them a fable. They will have it that the soul of man, once a part of God, returns to God at death; but that it

returns to him, not as a human soul, but as God himself. As to the different classes of disciples, they follow wholly the custom of the Manichees. The path which they mark out for the novice, is not easy. Nor do they at first declare to him their whole intentions, but lead him about through a labyrinth. Nor do they reveal the secret symbol of their lodge, till they are sure that he has become so fascinated, as to be capable of being persuaded to do anything. They expose their mysteries only to those who are bound by an oath. And the highest class of teachers reserve some principles unrevealed to the rest, by which they may support their superiority. In this particular, their sect was not unlike the gradations of masonry.

If we should undertake to give the history of all who assumed the title of libertines, and who received their vain imaginations, we should assume an endless task. We say, *who assumed the title*, for the name was chosen by themselves, and not fixed upon them as a term of reproach. The term libertine means a freed-man, one delivered from slavery. And they used it to intimate such a deliverance. And this branch of the anabaptist sect was exceeding numerous, extending its ramifications through France, Holland, Brabant, and through Lower Germany in general. But Calvin's history of them was confined to those nations which used the French language. And as we follow his description, it is not material that we should extend our view beyond the range of it. It

will suffice to show in a few words, how the poison was introduced, and what men first communicated it. A man of Flanders, Coppin Insulan, an ignorant person, who had no other way to distinguish himself, began, in his native city, to put forth his impudence and pollution. Afterwards, another rose, by the name of Quintin, who entirely eclipsed the first, and was reputed the founder of the sect. And this debauchee was so pleased with his reputation, that he was careful not to mention the name of his master, nor to have it known that he had learnt anything from him. He was born in the region of Hanover. When he came over to France is not known. For years before the date of Calvin's history, he was in France, and had an associate by the name of Bertrand. These men, we are informed by Stephen de Fabrique—whose memory as a martyr of Christ ought to be sacred with all christians—fled their country for their crimes, rather than for the word of God. With them was associated another, by the name of Claudin Perseval. And so effectually did they prosecute their work, as to have corrupted very many in France, and to have left deposits of their poison, wherever they went. These, with the addition of a despicable priest, by the name of Anthony Pocque, were the first teachers and patriarchs of the sect. Afterwards many emulated the example of these, and a swarm of teachers came forth, advanced to the degree of doctors in three days, and each aspiring to be the greatest. It was an easy way

to distinction, in which impudence would serve instead of genius. And all the above named teachers were superlatively ignorant. Neither was there either rhyme or reason in their discourses, no more than if they were so many fishmongers, discoursing of astrology. Quintin and Bertrand had been tailors, and they wished to live delicately, according to their former habits, and avoid hard labor, and so chose to spend their life in gabbling.

These deceivers used every art, and every form of dissimulation, to appear as the servants of God, and seduce the simple. Calvin gives an instance in these words: "Two years ago, Anthony Pocque spent some time in this city, and concealed his wicked doctrine; and when he departed, he sought to get a certificate from me, to help him deceive those with whom my name might have influence, and make it appear that I approved his devilish errors. But he did not act his part so cunningly as to prevent my suspecting him to be either a crazy man or a villain. And I admonished him in our church, though I then knew not so much of his wickedness as I discovered afterwards. I was confirmed in my opinion of him, by the poison which he spread after he returned from Hanover. When he saw that he could get nothing from me, then he alleged that Martin Bucer had readily granted what I denied. Whence it was evident, that he had concealed his poison, and deceived that servant of God, and made a bad use of his name. And when

I see these filthy and impudent fellows, without our knowledge, using us as pimps for corrupting the souls of men, should I not strip them of the disguise under which they promote their detestable designs? Shall I conceal poisoners, who are conspiring for the destruction of all people? If I knew a road to be beset with robbers, ought I not to declare the fact, and save the travelers from their grasp? But there is no robbery so wicked, and no poison so pernicious, as this accursed doctrine. Shall I be silent, when I see them under the shelter of the name of Christ, introducing the worst of all abomination, and branding infamy upon Christ himself, and setting him forth as worse than the devil? If I should, I should be more cowardly than the dog, who will not suffer his master to be assaulted, without barking. I cannot build the church, without carrying war against those who would pull it down."

Here the question naturally rises, If their doctrines were so absurd, so repugnant to scripture and to humanity, and their teachers so ignorant, how could they have gained so many followers, and among these some who before entertained the pure gospel. This question admits of several answers. In the first place, God suffers heresies to come in, to test the constancy of those who profess his truth, and to distinguish those who are really his. Thus many, who for a time seem to obey the gospel, and put on the form of godliness, are afterwards discovered to have been hypocrites.



In this way, the church is purified from defilements, and men learn that God is not to be trifled with. Furthermore, besides that common mother of all heresies, arrogance and self-confidence, we find upon a nearer view, especially two vices of the mind, operating to gain a reception for these errors. The one is a foolish curiosity, preferring superfluous questions to what is useful, leaving the simplicity of the scripture, and flying about, in the air, among vain and frivolous speculations. The other inclines the mind, even when it has begun to be imbued with a pure gospel, to abuse the truth, by treating it not only as a secular science, but even as a license to lead a dissolute life. It seems to be assumed as a first principle, that a gospel must be framed, to indulge the vicious propensities. And if they cannot find that warrant in it, they seek some perversion of its language, which will justify their plunging into all baseness. Indeed, most of this sect have one or the other of these casts of mind. They are either fanatics who desire to start vain and foolish questions, or profane men, weary of the yoke of Christ, and desirous to put their conscience to sleep, that they may serve satan without remorse. But how is it, that those who apply their minds to attain what is too high for them, should fall into such puerile follies, beneath the most unlearned? How is it, that those who desire to get far away from God, that they may live as they will, are capable of receiving such absurdities. It comes as a punishment from

the hand of God, who gives them up to a reprobate mind, that they may become beasts in human form. What dishonor did the leaders of this sect cast upon God, while, wandering and bewildered, they applied themselves to investigating new questions, and cast away the heavenly wisdom, revealed in the gospel, as if it were beneath their notice. They decided that God was not a fit master for them; and God saw fit to give them over to satan, and send them to his school. They spurned to restrain their minds within the bounds of truth, and they must needs go loose, into the pathless maze of error. Having grossly perverted the doctrine of the gospel, they deserved to lose their common sense, and knowledge of good and evil. This is God's way of showing his resentment of the reproach cast upon his word.

These are some of the reasons why Quintin and his partners had so many followers. But these causes do not, of course, exclude the instrumentality of the leaders of the sect, who, with their ignorance, combined much of tact and cunning. And that was especially employed in the use of that strange form of speech, of which we have already spoken, by which the common people were smitten with wonder, and so fascinated, as to mistake a shadow for a tree. They seem to have borrowed the trick from a class of mountebanks and vagrants, who had invented a strange form of speech, that none except their own fraternity could understand; but with this difference,

that their form of speech was not intelligible to themselves. They merely jabbered in high sounding words, with no more sense than there is in the gabbling of a goose. They used, indeed, common words, but so aside from their meaning, as to execute sheer nonsense. And their hearers could neither affirm or deny what they said, for the good reason that they said nothing. And they did it with the design to lay snares for the common people. They revealed to none the abomination of their true sentiments, except to those bound to them by oaths. Novices were permitted to stand and gape, and wonder at their words. Like robbers, they lurked, concealed under a senseless jargon of words, so put together as to have a seeming of sense, to those incompetent to penetrate their meaning. These are the "great swelling words" which Peter and Jude compare to foam and bubbles, from which nothing can be obtained. Calvin says—I remember once, when Quintin discovered me in a great assembly of men, and suddenly stopped his gibberish, and said that he would pause for me to reply to his discourse, of which I understood nothing. I replied, that I knew too much to understand what he had been saying, and that he himself knew nothing of it. But that it was clear, that he wished to bewilder and fascinate the minds of men, by his delirious ravings, which proved to be the fact. For they plunged into such foolish speculations, and so lost themselves in words, as to see neither heaven

nor earth. And it was soon discovered, that they gabbled, rather than uttered anything intelligible.

They were gross dissemblers, asserting now this and now that, and always adjusting themselves to the wishes of their hearers. They even gloried in dissembling, and valued themselves upon their dexterity in the art. It was a leading article in their theology, that they ought to know the art of dissembling, and assuming all shapes, the more easily to impose upon men.— They had no scruple to bow before idols, nor to feign an adherence to all the superstitions of the papists. For they held, that all outward acts were at the liberty of the christian. They had great delight in mocking and cheating men, both by dress and speech; and from them seems to have originated the phrase of turning the coat, to conceal the party to which they belonged. If Quintin were arrested by the papists, it would have disturbed him little. For he would have been released at once by assenting to any and every popish doctrine. For the first article of his faith was, to use this very artifice, and be double tongued, and assume any shape to meet occasions.

We have already spoken of their abuse of the scripture, first rejecting them outright, with plentiful terms of reproach, and then, when they found this would not do, turning it all into an allegorical sense, under pretence of avoiding the letter, which killeth, and retaining the spirit, which giveth life. They always began their discourse with the name of the spirit, and

rarely did they utter two sentences, without it. But they attached several senses to the word, to suit occasions, as in some country churches of the papists, the people were wont to erect one image, to answer for five or six saints, and to offer as many kinds of offerings to it. So these villains applied the name of spirit to all things, as they saw fit; and used it as a seasoning for all kinds of food. They called the word of God the spirit. They even called Christ the spirit, designing to use words so as not to be understood. Applying the term spirit to everything that came into mind, they sought to confuse the thoughts, and work up an illusion, and impress the ignorant, that they were eminently spiritual and semi-angelic. If a pious man fell into their hands, and heard them talking only of the spirit, and saying that the word of God is nothing but spirit, that Christ is spirit, and we ought to be spirit with him, that our life ought to be spirit, &c., it would seem in the first impression, that they were very pious and zealous men, who would not for a world see the word of God dishonored, by an unchristian life. Thus would they steal the march upon him, and secure his esteem and love, and very naturally his faith in their system. But afterwards they would come down from their lofty discourse, and revel in all filthiness. For there was no debauchee, nor robber, so profligate, and desperate, as to dare to go to such excesses, and to approve of such execrable villainies, as did these pious spirituals.

As to the articles of their faith, the leading one was, that it is the spirit of God alone, that is, and lives, in all creatures. So they reduce to nothing, the essence of the soul of man, and of angels. They pretend that angels are nothing but inspirations or motions, that creatures have really no being, that instead of our souls, God lives in us, causing our bodies to vegetate, and putting forth all our vital actions. As to the devil, they use his name and speak of him in a way peculiar to themselves. For they understand the devil, the world, and sin, to be nothing but an imagination, and say that when we think of the devil, or of sin, we entertain frivolous and vain imaginations. Sin, they say, is a privation of good, an imagination that vanishes to nothing. Thus they take away all distinction of good and evil, hold that man consists of body and of imagination, that the natural man has a soul partaking of the world, and of the devil, and so is destined to pass off into smoke.

By their notion of the only spirit, they annihilated the natures of angels and devils and souls. They make whatever exists or is done in the universe, as the immediate work of the only spirit. They attribute to man no more of will, nor of responsibility, than if he were a mere stone. They deny all distinction of good and evil, since God is made the author of all acts. When, for instance, Quintin had on one occasion come to a place, where a man lay, who had just been murdered, he met there a pious man, who

exclaimed, Who has done this shocking deed? he replied, "I have done it, if you wish to know." The other, with astonishment, said, "Are you such a villain?" Quintin replied, "It was not I, but God." The other asked, "How can you impute such a thing to God, who commands us to punish the murderer?" Then he replied, "You have done it, and I have done it, and God has done it. For what you or I do, God does, and what God does, we ourselves do." This granted, all sin must be imputed to God, or, rather, there is no sin, since all are God's acts. We can blame no one, for God acts all. And so each may do what comes into his mind; and there is no danger connected with sin, because no blame. An act of murder or adultery is as innocent as an act of charity. And yet, if a little finger of their own were touched, they were quite sensitive to the wrong, and forgot all their philosophy, and broke forth into a rage. The following incident is in point. A certain cobbler of this sect in Paris, was strong in the notion, that nothing could be wrong or sinful. He called one day, on some business, upon Stephen de Fabrique, and found him in a state of anxiety, on account of a servant, who had absconded, after having robbed him of a sum of money, and who he feared would transact business in his name, and involve him still more. The cobbler asked what had befallen him. Being a man of few words, he briefly told the story. Upon this, the cobbler, stretching himself with an air of



wisdom, blamed him for blaspheming God, by calling God's act wickedness. Stephen, seeing that it would be useless to reason with him, broke off the discourse. Some days after, an apprentice of this cobbler committed theft, and the poor philosopher flew into a rage, and ran hither and thither, in search of the thief. And when he failed to find him, he came to Stephen, mourning and complaining, and seeking consolation, and showering upon the thief storms of reproaches, when Stephen interrupted him, and said, Why do you blaspheme God? The man was confounded at the return of his own philosophy, but not convinced of his folly.

The foregoing will show what must have been their views of divine providence. They made the agency of God, and of course the providence of God, to be of a nature which excluded all other agencies. Man, of course, could do nothing, and had no use for his conscience, no occasion to watch against sin. And they confessed that their object was, to put conscience to sleep, while doing what appetite or inclination might dictate. And after having shaped God to their lusts, and made him, as an elegant picture, covering all manner of abominations, concealed behind it, they dealt in the same manner with Christ, and made of him an idol, set up in opposition to the Son of God, and a sack full of all filthy things, yea, a common sewer to receive all uncleanness. They represented him as made of the spirit of God, which is in us all,

and said that he died on the cross only in appearance. Yea, they made him a mere phantasm—our Redeemer only as a type, to show what is needful to our salvation. They held that his sufferings were only a tragedy, to set forth the mystery of salvation. When they said Christ abolished sin, they meant that in his person he represented the abolition of sin. When they said that he destroyed death, they meant that he, while personating death, died. And then they said that every one is Christ, because that what was done in him, is done in all.

As to regeneration, they said that we cannot be the sons of God without it. And they used magnificent words to extol regeneration, such as—We are of God—the old man must be crucified—the old Adam must die—the flesh must be mortified—the world must be conquered—sin must no more reign in us. Thus they used the words of the pure doctrine. An angel could not speak better. God has spoken thus. But when they came to tell us what they meant, they perverted everything into execrable blasphemies. Regeneration, they said, is the restoration of the innocence which Adam had before he sinned. And this innocence is gained, by doing away the distinction between right and wrong, between white and black—because Adam got the knowledge of good and evil from his sin. Hence, to mortify the old man, is to see no difference between sin and holiness, and to follow every inclination. This they make to be the

becoming like little children. If they see any one disturbed in conscience, for having done wrong, they say, O Adam, do you still make a difference? If they see any one under fear of the judgment of God, they say, Have you still the taste of that apple? have a care lest the morsel choke you.

Their idea of christian liberty is, that all things are lawful. Having turned man to a brute, they allow him to pursue his brutal lusts. And what the scriptures say of the christians, being delivered from the curse of the law, they interpret to mean, that he is delivered from all obligation to obey the law. And they have quite as strange ideas of a christian's calling. Paul admonishes us to abide in the calling in which we are called, meaning that each should be content to serve God in the condition which providence has allotted to him, not inordinately desiring a change, nor coveting the offices or duties of others. This they pervert to mean, that every one ought to follow his natural inclinations, and that there is no way of life, which men do pursue, that they ought not to pursue—that the priest ought to continue to sing his masses, and the monk to abide in his cloister, as the swine in his sty—and the debauchee to continue his debaucheries, for that is his calling. As an inference from the foregoing principles, they held to what fanatics call spiritual marriage, and that the solemnizing of marriages is carnal, and that a christian is not bound by it. And that all restraints upon the com-

merce of the sexes, are wrong. The communion of the saints, according to them, is a community of goods, and an abolishing of the right of holding private property, and every one's right to whatever he can lay his hands upon. As to the resurrection, they believed it already past, that the soul at death is absorbed in God, and thus loses its personal consciousness, and with it, all the consequences of all the acts of the past life.

This sect was nearer to that of our present universalists, than to any other now in existence. For many of the leading principles are common to both. Both believe that angels and devils are not real existences, but mere conceits of the brain. Both believe essentially in the fatalist theory, which throws upon God the responsibility of the acts of men, and annihilates all sin. Both make it the great end of their teaching, to relieve the conscience from the pain of remorse, and make the sinner happy in this life, and in his sins. Both believe that there is no hell, no punishment in the future world for the deeds done in the body, and no day of judgment after death. So that as the two systems address themselves to the conscience, they are essentially one. The teaching of both have the same object, to disburden the conscience of all fear of hell, and make the way of sin and impenitence smooth and easy. In accomplishing this object, both take about the same liberties with the scriptures, professing to hold to the scriptures, and

yet putting such glosses upon them as to make black to be white, and white black. There was about the libertine theory, that which is much more gross and revolting, and that which in this age would be in no way tolerated; and yet its essential elements nearly coincided with the theory of the universalists. It did a guilty conscience and the passions and appetites of a rebellious mind, just the same service.

## CHAPTER X.

Having thus far traced the history of the anabaptists which flourished in the age of the reformation, it may gratify the curiosity of some if I here take a glance at the history of those in the church, or out of it, who, in the centuries before the reformation, denied infant baptism. For it is very natural to inquire whether the fathers of the anabaptism that disturbed the work of Luther, such as Muncer, Stork, and others, were the continuation of a line of previous anti-pædobaptists.

Though it must, of course, be claimed by such as oppose infant baptism, that the first christians did not practise it, we can first, in a little space, show, that for the first four hundred years of the christian church, there was next to no opposition, in theory or practice, against the baptism of infants. All who are adequately acquainted with the subject, confess that the practice of baptizing infants after that time, that is, after the age of Augustine, till the year 1000 and after, was essentially undisputed. Tombs, a father of

the anti-pædobaptists in England, (Examen pt. 1. sect. 8,) says: "The authority of Augustine was it, which carried the baptism of infants in the following ages, almost without control." Here, then, is, from high authority, an admission, that after the time of Augustine, the practice was at least "almost" uniform, in favor of infant baptism. Now let us see how it was in the time of Augustine, and from that time back to the days of the apostles.

In the time of Augustine, infant baptism is spoken of more frequently, than by earlier writers, in consequence of the Pelagian controversy, which brought in question the subject of original sin, and of course infant baptism, and which led writers on both sides to speak with distinctness. In the commencement of this controversy, Augustine wrote three books, entitled, "Of Guilt and Forgiveness of Sins, and of the Baptism of Infants." His design was, to prove original sin, chiefly from the universal and apostolic practice of baptizing infants. In the first of these books he says, in substance—That infants are acknowledged by all christians, to stand in need of baptism, which must be for their original sin, for they have no other. The Pelagians held to a middle state between heaven and hell, to which infants not baptized would go, and that infants were not baptized for forgiveness of sin, but to secure heaven in preference to that middle state. Upon this Augustine says:

"These men, if they be asked whether infants, not



baptized, and not made heirs of the kingdom, have yet the benefit of eternal salvation, at the resurrection of the dead, are at a great plunge, and can find no way out of it. For what christian man can endure to hear it said, that any person may come to eternal salvation, that is not regenerated in Christ—which he has ordered to be done by baptism.” Here let it be noticed, that Augustine, like all christian writers of the first ages, held to the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation. This habit of speaking probably originated in the days of the apostles, when no one’s christian profession could be credited, while he refused baptism—the ordinance being commanded by apostles then present, could admit of no doubt; and no christian could then honestly refuse it. And this was enough to beget the habit of speaking of baptism, as indispensable to a credible profession, and to salvation. But we are not so much concerned with the cause of the habit, as with the matter of fact. With, or without a warrant, almost all the christian fathers concur, in speaking of baptism, both of infants and adults, as indispensable to salvation. And Augustine proceeds:

“Who dares affirm, that infants may be saved without that regeneration, [i. e. baptism] as if Christ had not died for sinners? And if those who it is plain have committed no sin in their own life, are not held captive under the original bond of sin, how did Christ, who died for sinners, die for them? If they

are not diseased with any sickness or original sin, why are they carried to Christ the physician, to receive the sacrament of eternal salvation, [baptism] by the godly fear of friends, that run with them to it? Why is it not said to them in the church, Carry back these innocent creatures; the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick? Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners? So odd a thing never was said, never is said, and never will be said." Again, in chapter 26 he says:

"Now, then, since they grant, that infants must be baptized, as they are not able to oppose the authority of the whole church, which was surely delivered by our Lord and his apostles; they must consequently grant, that they stand in need of the benefits of a mediator; that being offered by the sacrament, and the charity of the faithful, and so being incorporated into Christ's body, they may be reconciled to God." And then in chapter 34, showing how much that class of his opponents which allowed that infants are baptized for forgiveness of sins, differed from the others, he says, "The one, minding the scriptures and the authority of the whole church, and the form of the sacrament itself, see well, that baptism in infants, is for remission of sins, but cannot see, or will not own, that it is original sin. The other, considering human nature, see well, as it is easy to do, that that age cannot in its own life, have contracted any sin; but rather than confess original sin, say that there is no sin at all in infants."

These quotations indicate the drift of the discussion. Pelagius and his followers denied original sin; the orthodox with Augustine argued against them, that the infants' acknowledged need of baptism, proves them to have sin. The Pelagians did not deny the necessity of infant baptism, though deeply interested to do it if they could. And when Augustine affirms it to have been the practice of the whole church, from the time of the apostles, they confess it, and content themselves with affirming, that infants, though baptized, are not baptized for forgiveness of sin.

The second book in the work from which we have quoted, is against the perfectionism of Pelagius. The third, commenting on Rom. 5: 12, 13, says, "The words can have no sense, but such a one, by which it has come to pass, that the whole church has from of old, constantly held, that baptized infants do obtain remission of original sin, by the baptism of Christ." He then goes on to show, that an infant may be baptized before the eighth day. Then in chapter 6, he gives his assertion that "he never, till recently, met with any christian, orthodox or heterodox, nor with any writer, who owned the scriptures, who taught any other doctrine, than that infants are to be baptized for the pardon of sin." Having quoted some passages out of Jerome, he proceeds:

"If we could with convenience come to ask that most learned man, How many writers of christian dissertations, and interpreters of the holy scriptures, could he recount, who from the time that Christ's

church had been founded, have held no otherwise, and have received no other doctrine from their predecessors, what, think you, would be his answer? For my part, though my reading is much less than his, I do not remember that I ever heard any other thing from any christians that received the Old and New Testaments, neither from such as were of the catholic church, nor from such as belonged to any sect or schism. I do not remember, that I ever read otherwise in any writer that I could ever find, treating of these matters, that followed the canonical scriptures, or did even pretend to do so. From whence this trouble is started upon us, I know not. But a little while ago, when I was in Carthage, I just cursorily heard some transient discourse of some people that were talking that infants are not to be baptized, for that reason, that they may receive remission of sin, but that they may be sanctified in Christ. Though I was something startled at the novelty, yet because it was not seasonable then to enter into any discourse against it, and because they were not persons of such rank as to be noticed, it passed over with me, as a thing forgotten. And lo, now it is a thing maintained against the church, with ardent endeavors." Here Augustine declares, that up to this time he never heard a speaker or writer, owning the scriptures, deny that baptism was to be given to infants for the remission of sins; and much less, had he heard a denial that it was to be given at all. And though he

speaks modestly of the extent of his reading, it was yet such, that he was able to publish, a few years after, a history of all sects and opinions, that ever existed in christendom.

Further, Pelagius had objected, that "If baptism do take away original sin, such children as are born of parents both baptized, must be without that sin." To this Augustine replies, "If I had this cause to manage against such men, as did either deny that infants are to be baptized, or did say it is needless to baptize them, for that they being born of baptized parents, were necessarily partakers of their parents' privilege, then I ought to take more pains in confuting this opinion. But now," (chapter 9,) says he, "since we have to do with such as do confess, that the children of baptized parents are to be baptized, how much better is it to say to them, 'You that do affirm, that of parents cleansed from the stain of sin, children should be born without sin, how is it that you do not mind, that at the same rate you might say, that of christian parents there should be born christian children; and then why do you determine that they are to be baptized?'"

Thus it will be seen, how full and clear is the testimony of Augustine, as to the matter of infant baptism, in and before his time. We will give the testimony of his opponents, the Pelagians, equally full.

Pelagius, having been accused before the bishop of Rome, put forth his creed in self defence, in which he

speaks thus concerning baptism: "We hold one baptism, which we say ought to be administered, with the same sacramental words, to infants, as it is to older persons." Thus, notwithstanding he had a great interest to reject infant baptism, so universally was the doctrine then held in the church, and so full was the evidence that it always had been so, and that it came from the apostles, that he was compelled to retain it. Together with his creed, he sent a letter of explanations, to show that his adversaries misrepresented him, and to justify himself wherein he differed from them. In this letter he says that he had been slandered, as if he denied baptism to infants, or promised them the kingdom of heaven, without the redemption of Christ. And to this he answers: "I never heard, no, not even any impious heretic or sectary, who would say that infants are not to be baptized. For who is there so ignorant of that which is read in the gospel, as (I will not say to affirm this, but) in any heedless way to say such a thing, or even to have such a thought. In a word, who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and so make them miss of the kingdom of heaven?"

Now here is the confession of the greatest disturber of the peace of the christian world in his day, and one who had strong reasons to desire the contrary to be true, that he never heard even a sectary deny baptism to infants.

Celestius, one of his followers, put forth his creed

about the same time, addressed to Zosimus, successor to Innocent, and for a similar purpose, though differing in minor points from that of Pelagius. In his creed he says, "We own that infants ought, according to the rule of the universal church, and according to the sense of the gospel, to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, because our Lord has determined, that the kingdom of heaven cannot be conferred on any but baptized persons."

This is not the place to give the whole history of that controversy. But the great embarrassment which Pelagius and his friends had with infant baptism, shows how gladly they would have rejected it if they could, and how irresistible in their day was the proof, that it was an ordinance of God. They were pressed beyond measure, with the argument for original sin from infant baptism, and were driven to absurd and contradictory positions to evade it. Sometimes they said infants were not baptized for forgiveness of sins; but for something else. Sometimes they own that they were baptized for forgiveness of sins—not that they had any sin, but that the uniformity of the words might be kept, or because they were baptized with a sacrament, which was the means of forgiveness, for any that had sinned, or should sin. Sometimes it was said that infants had sin, though not by propagation from a sinful stock, but that they had it in another state before they were born. So difficult was it for them to dispose of infant baptism. And how much



easier would it have been to have disowned it, if they could with any show of reason. But so far from disowning it, they confess it to be the rule of the universal church, the sense of the gospel, and declare that they never had heard even the most impious heretic disown it.

If there had been any church or sect of anti-pædobaptists in the world at this time, or before this time, would they not have found it, having such a stimulus to search diligently? They had been great travelers, had had actual acquaintance with a great part of christendom. Pelagius was born in Britain, and Celestius in Ireland. They had lived long at Rome, whither people from all parts of the world then collected; were both for some time in Carthage in Africa. One had settled in Jerusalem, and the other traveled through all the noted Greek and eastern churches. There could have been no church that had any singular practice in this matter, and they not know it. And we may fairly conclude, that there was not at that time in existence, nor in the memory of man, any society of professed christians, that denied baptism to infants. This cuts off all pretence that there were sects at that time holding the same opinions that are now held by baptists.

Having shown what were the opinions of the parties on both sides of the Pelagian controversy, I next proceed to show the decision of a council respecting it. In the year 418, i. e. 318 after the apostles, there

was a council assembled at Carthage, consisting of all the bishops of all the provinces of Africa, 214 in number. This council condemn two errors, about the baptism of infants ; one, of those who thought that an infant might, on no account, be baptized before he was eight days old, and the other of those that held that infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sin, and yet have no sin. Their decree is in these words :

“ Also we determine, that whosoever does deny that infants may be baptized as soon as they are born, or does say, that they are indeed baptized for the forgiveness of sins, and yet that they derive no original sin from Adam—let him be anathema.” This canon, let it be remarked, is not what some have pretended, a canon establishing infant baptism, as a new thing, or a thing questioned before. But it assumes that the ordinance was practiced by all parties ; and condemns two false opinions of some of those who did practice it.

After the sentiments of the Pelagians had been condemned by this council, one of the party wrote to Rome, hoping to retrieve their interest there ; and among other things said, in self-justification, “ We do acknowledge, that the grace of Christ is necessary for all, both grown persons and infants ; and we renounce all that would say, that one that is born of parents both baptized ought not to be baptized.” Another letter was sent to the eastern churches, signed by eighteen of the party, in which they say : “ We own baptism to be necessary for all ages.”

Augustine, in a letter to Julian, one of the party, tells them why they did not renounce infant baptism, when it was so much in their way. He says :

“ If you would come to be of this mind, you would own the grace of Christ towards infants, in its true and natural sense. And you would not be put to those shifts, to say things impious, and absurd, either that infants are not to be baptized, which perhaps you will hereafter say, or that so great a sacrament is, in their case, such a mockery, as that they were baptized into a Saviour, but not saved from anything, that they are washed in the laver of regeneration, but have nothing washed off in it. And all this, because you are afraid to say, they should not be baptized, lest not only the men would spit in your faces, but the women also should throw their sandals at your feet.”

This shows how universal and how deeply seated was the doctrine of infant baptism, at that time. Then Julian, to whom this letter was addressed, was so enraged against any that would insinuate that he or his party ever meant to deny infant baptism, that he anathematizes all that deny it. These are his words : “ We are so far from denying it to be profitable to all ages, that we allot an eternal anathema to those that say it is not necessary even for infants.”

Volumes might be selected from the writings of Augustine and his opponents, of equal force with that which I have exhibited, to show that infant baptism,

in that age, was in universal practice, as a custom received from the apostles. But we have another kind of evidence, if possible, still more convincing. Five persons in this age and before, to wit, Ireneus, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Augustine, and Theodoret, wrote, each of them, catalogues of all sects in their day. And yet none of them find any sect that denied infant baptism, and retain that of adults. Augustine says of those who denied baptism, that they also disown the scripture, or a great part of it. Now, how could it be, that there should be sects denying infant baptism, and these writers of the history of all religions not notice them? If the orthodox had not baptized infants, and the other sects had, it would have been noticed, and so if it were the other way. Ireneus, the first of the four, was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John. And he gives accounts of sects that existed before the death of John. And though he spoke of infant baptism, as in practice in his day, early as it was, and though he finds sects that rejected all baptism, and most of the bible with it, he found none that rejected infant baptism, and retained that of adults. And the testimony of the other four goes to the same result.

Now what does the sum of what these quotations prove? They show beyond all ground of rational doubt, that in the age of Augustine, that is, 300 years after the apostles, the practice of infant baptism was universal, among professing christians of all sects who

acknowledged the christian scriptures—that orthodox and heterodox united in this testimony—that the most learned men of the age, and those who had traveled most extensively over the christian world, had never read or heard of a sect, acknowledging the scriptures, who did not baptize their infants, and who did not regard infant baptism as an ordinance established by the apostles. Now in case infant baptism came in without a warrant from the scriptures, and without connection with the practice of the apostles, it is a remarkable fact, that in 300 years from the decease of the apostles, men of the most extensive information should not be able to tell how and when the thing began. It is a remarkable fact that there should be such unanimity in the erroneous practice, that there should have been no line of dissenters, extending down from the apostles, and bearing testimony against the error. Or if there was such a succession of anti-pædobaptists, it is still more strange that neither Augustine nor his enemy Pelagius, nor any of the learned men associated with each, should never have heard of it.

Now suppose we had no other means of knowing what were the sentiments and views of the church in ages still nearer the apostles, would not this of itself be satisfactory proof, that infant baptism commenced under the hands of the apostles, and that they must have understood the command to baptize all nations in the literal sense, including all persons of all nations.

Suppose every other father in the church to be silenced, and every book written previous to this age, except the bible, with every quotation from it, to be burnt, would not the evidence which we have collected from the age of Augustine, be sufficient to satisfy any candid mind, that this ordinance must have been established by the apostles? Are we not fully competent to know, what ordinance existed in the church 300 years ago? Though sects have multiplied in these latter days, making the matter much more complex, yet we can open the history and tell respecting all considerable sects that existed in the christian world 300 years ago, which of them practiced infant baptism, and which did not. And to say that Augustine and Pelagius could not know whether that rite was practiced in the church 300 years before them is absurd. Or to say that two such persons, so opposed to each other, could agree to falsify against their better knowledge, when one of them had such reasons to wish the fact were otherwise, is preposterous.

But there is an abundance of evidence, of a still earlier date, showing the practice of infant baptism to have been general in the church, in the first ages, and that there was then no succession of opponents of it. But it would carry me too much aside from my present purpose, to give it here, and I rather omit it, because I have published it in another form, and because what I have here given is amply sufficient.

Thus it appears that there was no succession of

opposers of infant baptism, before the age of Augustine. And that there was none for a long time after that age, we have given the authority of an eminent anti-pædobaptist writer. From that age onward till after the year 1000, we find no trace of such a class of people. The writers of that time, who speak of infant baptism, generally speak of it as a thing uncontroverted. Wall, who has extensively examined this subject, says of the writings of this interval, "There is not one saying, quotation, or example, that makes against it, [infant baptism] produced or pretended, but what has been clearly shown to be a mistake. As in the first 400 years there is but one, Tertullian, who advised it to be deferred till the age of reason, and one Nazianzen till three years of age, in case of no danger of death; so in the following 600 years, there is no account or report of any one man that opposed it."

But in 1050, Bruno, bishop of Angiers, and Berengarius, archdeacon of the same church, were, with some appearance of truth, charged with a denial of infant baptism. But that they did deny it, does not appear by any sufficient proof. About this time it became common for small bodies of men to start up here and there, with opinions differing from the catholic church, and from those of each other, but agreeing in renouncing the pope, transubstantiation, the worship of images, and other grosser corruptions then of recent origin. English writers generally give to them the name of Waldenses. Other writers have attached



to them several nicknames; among others, those of Berengarians, Cathari or Puritans, Paterines, Petrobrusians, Lyonists, and Albigenses. The term Waldenses is used with much confusion. But among the Waldenses, properly speaking, there is no sufficient evidence that any anti-pædobaptists were found. It is admitted that there were such among the Albigenses. And as far as it can be determined, it appears that the first opposition to infant baptism commenced in France. Cotemporary popish writers abundantly charge the Waldenses of denying the doctrine. To this it is replied, that this was a slanderous accusation, not to be relied on as proof. And several confessions of the Waldenses themselves are extant, in which they own infant baptism. And such confessions are better evidence than the accusations of their enemies. And the posterity of the Waldenses, in Piedmont, were found in the practice of it, when the protestants in Luther's time sent to inquire after them and confer with them. And they affirmed that their ancestors never practiced otherwise.

But there seems to be little occasion for controversy on this subject. Since, if we take the term Waldenses in the larger sense, to include the several sects that were often called by that name, it is plain that there were opposers of infant baptism, and, indeed, of all baptism, and even Manichees among them. Of the class improperly styled Waldenses, and whom Wall reckons as the first that ever set up a church or soci-

ety against infant baptism, were the Petrobrusians. This sect was begun by two Frenchmen, Peter and Henry Bruis or Bruce. The first had been a catholic priest, settled in a small parish on small means. And he had been ejected from his place. Henry had been a monk, and had deserted the monastery at the time of Peter's ejection. Peter Bruce first made a party in the district of Dauphiny, and in the mountainous and wild parts of those districts. The date of the movement was 1126. Thence it extended into the plain country in the province of Narbonne. Eventually it gathered crowds of people in and about Toulouse and the mouth of the Rhone, and also in many places in the province of Gascony. This work progressed till about the year 1144, when Peter Bruce was taken by the papists, and burnt. This put a check to the progress of his doctrine; but Henry continued to propagate it in several places.

Catholic historians paint in vivid colors, what they call the outrages committed by the sect. They speak of the people being re-baptized, the churches profaned, the altars dug up, the crosses burnt, the priests scourged, the monks imprisoned, and the like. And to Henry they give the worst moral character that pen can describe. But in this they are no more to be credited, than when they accuse such men as Wickliffe, Luther, and Melancthon, of being anabaptists. In the year 1146 or 7, he was in the territory of St. Giles, when some bishops came thither to expel his

doctrines. Henry fled and concealed himself for some time, but was at last taken and delivered to the bishop, and their doctrine was gradually rooted out from the minds of the people.

The above statements will suffice to give an adequate view of the anabaptism on the continent of Europe, before the Reformation. For what some have alleged about anabaptism among the Hussites, is of a piece with the attempt to make an anabaptist of Wickliffe, which we have yet to notice. There were then before the days of Stork and Muncer, some small sects here and there, rejecting infant baptism, and more rejecting all baptism. But there is an entire want of evidence that German anabaptists took their notions from them. The German anabaptists were undoubtedly, in the fullest sense, original in their doctrines.

Another question of some importance is, Whether there were in England any anabaptists before the Reformation. Some baptist historians on this subject, base large pretensions upon small proofs. I have selected Crosby's History of the English Baptists as an example. I will first show in what way this baptist writer seems to himself to prove, that Wickliffe was opposed to infant baptism, and then refer to the positive evidence in Wickliffe's own words, that he was not. He first tells us, (vol. 1, page 7,) that it is now very difficult to know what Wickliffe's opinions were, because all his books are burnt. Which asser-

tion is not true, in either part of it. His words are, "As to his opinions, it is very difficult now to give a certain account of them, because they who took so much care to burn his bones, did not neglect to destroy his books. \* \* \* \* \* We are now therefore forced to take the account of his opinions from his enemies." Now what shall we think of such a statement, when we read in Le Bas (page 382) that "In spite of this posthumous persecution, the reformer, though dead, has still continued to speak, and it has been calculated that full three fourths of his writings survive at this day?" And Le Bas gives the titles of more than seventy of his books extant, with the places where they are to be found.

Nor is there any difficulty in ascertaining Wickliffe's opinions on infant baptism, as we shall show. Equally wide of the mark is this standard baptist author, when he says: "I am inclined to believe Mr. Wickliffe was a baptist, because some men of great note and learning, in the church of Rome, have left it upon record, that he denied infant baptism." Proh pudor! Did not this writer know that there has been scarcely one of the reformers, not excepting Luther, the arch-enemy of anabaptism, who might not by just such proof be convicted?

Again he says: "What if Wickliffe did write a book, in which he approved infant baptism, yet it does not hence follow, that he might not afterwards be of another mind." True, but what of this, in the total

absence of proof that he was of another mind? It would require as many volumes of such evidence to make out the proof, as it would of mere cyphers to make a million.

Wickliffe, so far from being a baptist, did not even believe in the necessity of immersion, as the papists of his day almost universally did. Le Bas says, and quotes his authority for saying, "With regard to baptism, he denies the necessity of chrism, and trine immersion, or of anything more than the affusion of water. That he deemed the baptism of infants to be requisite, is evident from his concession that females may be allowed to administer it to children, in case of urgent need." And while inculcating spiritual worship, Wickliffe says: "The priests minister the outward token; but the spiritual grace within is ministered to us of God. It is he alone that christeneth the soul, that is, washeth it from the uncleanness of all manner of sin, and therefore children and sometimes men and women are christened with water." And also in maintaining his opinion against the absolute and universal necessity of baptism for salvation, he shows that the propriety of infant baptism with him was not even a matter of doubt. His words are: "When an infant of believers is brought to the church, that, according to Christ's rule, he may be baptized, and the water or some other requisite is wanting, and the people's pious intentions continuing, he dies in the meantime, naturally by the will of God, it seems

hard to define positively the damnation of such an infant." In another place he says, "We hold it to be without doubt, that infants that are rightly baptized with water, are baptized with the third baptism [that of the spirit,] since they have the baptismal grace." These are but a small part of the words of Wickliffe, quoted by Baxter and others, showing that Wickliffe was a believer in infant baptism. But they are sufficient. Yet our logical historian thinks that even these quotations show that "he was inclinable to the opinion of the baptists," because he allowed that infants might, in extreme cases, be saved without baptism!! In that case, the whole world is now so inclinable.

By such kind of reasoning, and with about the same success, the author labors hard through many pages to make out that Wickliffe's followers, the Lollards in England, were baptists. Having well considered the whole, we are sure that there were no anti-pædobaptists in England before the reformation, and that the English baptists owe their origin wholly to anabaptists, transplanted from the continent. And we were amazed to find the proofs of such utter ignorance of the history of German anabaptism, in one who has produced four volumes of history of the baptists.

But to return to the Lollards. Wall (part 2, ch. 7,) says: "That the English Lollards had been all along free from any such opinions, is evident from a

very ancient tract of theirs, which they presented to the parliament, which is recited by one Dimmock, who writes an answer to it, and dedicates his answer to king Richard II., which must be about or before the year 1390. This tract is brought to light from some ancient manuscripts at Cambridge. In it the Lollards, complaining of popish abuses, reckon this one, the forbidding of marriage, from whence did flow effects worse than fornication. For they say, though slaying children ere they be christened, be full sinful, yet sodomy was worse."

And of a piece with his assertion that the Lollards were baptists, is his groundless declaration, that there were baptists among the first Plymouth church. In previous pages, this historian had asserted, that John Robinson, in Holland, had joined in a fierce controversy against the baptists. And he also makes quotations which show that the exiled congregational churches in Holland excommunicated Mr. Smith, for his opposition to infant baptism. Now it is preposterous to suppose that these churches, and John Robinson in particular, would place anabaptists among that select company, chosen to plant the seed of a pure church in the new world. But we need no argument, to refute so groundless assertions. Speaking of the first Plymouth church, Crosby says (vol. 1. page 111) "That some of these were baptists, appears from Mr. Cotton Mather's Eccl. Hist. New England, lib. 1. ch. 2. \* \* \* \* They set sail from Southampton



in England, August 5, 1620, and arrived at Cape Cod about the 9th of November following; among these some few were anti-pædobaptists. So that anti-pædobaptism is as ancient in those parts, as christianity itself." Astonished at an assertion so contrary to well known facts, I consulted the chapter of Cotton Mather to which the author refers, and found not a word or hint of the kind in it. This, it seems, is the kind of history by which the world are asked to believe that the protestantism, both of old England and New England, originated under anti-pædobaptist auspices. It might as well be pretended that John Robinson himself, yea, and the banishers of Roger Williams, were baptists. It is true that Mather, in another part of his book, when speaking of a baptist church established in Boston forty-five years after the settling of Plymouth, and probably with an eye on the individuals who were here and there found with baptist sentiments, back to a time as early as the settlement of the Massachusetts colony, says, in general terms: "Some few of these people have been among the planters from the beginning, and have been welcome to the communion of our churches, which they have enjoyed, reserving their particular opinions to themselves." But such a vague expression could not have been intended to assert, what is most contrary to known facts, that there were baptists in the company of the Mayflower.

## CHAPTER XI.

*The origin of the English baptists in connection with the German anabaptists.*

Standard writers of the baptist denomination acknowledge the anabaptists by their own name. Robinson, who has written a history of baptism in high repute with the baptists, everywhere speaks of these fanatics by the name of "the German baptists" and "the Dutch baptists." And though he gives few historical facts in relation to them, he defends them in most points, and apologises for the rest. One sentence from his history will reveal his general view of this subject. He says of them: "The fact was, differ how they would, they all practically rebuked the exorbitant pride and tyranny of ecclesiastics, and denied their dominion both in person and in the civil magistrate their deputy; and this was the sin, and the only sin, for which there was no absolution. Thus that mighty mass, the horrid heresy of anabaptism, melts down into five points, and these five points are only virtue in different views. For to resist tyranny over conscience ought in all ages to be counted a vir-

tue." (Page 438.) As far as our reading of baptist authors on this subject extends, this is a specimen of the general manner of their disposing of this subject.

If it be a fact, as is insinuated here and there, that the whole drift of history has done injustice to the anabaptists, and that they were quite a different class of men from what standard historians of their day have represented them, and that it is their misfortune to have had their history written only by their enemies, it is a very remarkable fact. If they were a class of people deserving to be had in grateful remembrance by posterity, and from whom a respectable denomination might be glad to trace their pedigree; and yet if this denomination taking its lineage from them, has never produced the historian that could do them justice, and vindicate their name from so much abuse, it is passing strange. If Mr. Robinson, or any other baptist historian, had evidence that they had been abused by the whole current of history, they could produce such evidence. And if they could, the duty was imperious, and it is passing strange that it has not been done.

No class of people have been reproached more than the puritans. But they have not wanted, and never will want, historians to do them justice. The puritans, though a noble race, had some glaring faults, which they inherited with their birth, and held in common with their age. But they were, after all, men from whom we glory in taking our descent. Now if the

anabaptists were such men, or anything like them, would the writing of their history have been left to their enemies? Impossible!

But our object in this chapter is simply to put the reader in possession of the facts, as far as we can gather them, connecting German anabaptism with the origin of the English baptists.

We have seen that anabaptism had no feature more prominent, than that of propagandism. It aspired and expected soon to rule the world. And it made it one of the first duties of proselytes, to take their life in hand, and go wherever a chance appeared, for depositing their leaven. In pursuance of this policy, efforts were early made, for transplanting the germs of the sect into England. An instance in point, is that of Peter Tash, related in Seckendorf's Apology. In the year 1538, Peter Tash, a German anabaptist, was detected by a letter of his, intercepted in correspondence with some of his friends in England, for the spread of the pestilence there. After arresting Tash, the elector of Saxony and the other protestant princes caused the following letter to be written to Henry VIII., by the hands of Melancthon :

“We have intercepted a letter of an anabaptist, whom we have arrested, in which we learn that the errors of that sect are secretly spread in England. Though you doubtless know, in general, what kind of men these are, we will relate some things of them. In those places in Germany where the pure gospel

has not been preached, and especially in Belgium, the people have heard exposures of ancient abuses, but have heard no better teaching. And there many errors have sprung up. For where there are not good teachers, the bad will be sure to come in. From these causes has sprung the delusion of the anabaptists; and they have spread through the regions of Friesland and Westphalia. In other parts of Germany, where the gospel is purely taught, it has fortified the minds of men, and led them of their own accord to shun the pest. And so by the favor of providence, our churches have been more tranquil than those of Belgium. But through all Germany, there is a concealed sprinkling of more or less of these impostors. They more especially teach anabaptism, and deny baptism to infants, and re-baptize those that were baptized by others. Anabaptism is the watchword of the faction; and to this they add many other deliriums. And in order the better to deceive, they affect an air of great holiness and self-denial. They teach that all goods should be held in common, that no punishment should be inflicted, that no christian should hold office, nor administer an oath. Yea, they wholly abolish the ordinance of government, which God has constituted. They usually begin their operations in a place, with these errors touching civil affairs, and when they have carried captive the minds, tinctured with superstition, they bring in a boundless confusion of other opinions. They teach error about

the nature and divinity of Christ. Like the Manichees, they boast of illuminations, despise the word of God, deny original sin, pretend that manifest crimes are no sin, in persons of their own sect. They hold absurd views of justification, and basely pollute the sanctity of marriage, and allow of lawless polygamy and divorce. And this barbarous confusion of errors and superstitions, after fermenting a while, breaks forth into sedition and rebellion, where they have sufficient force, as of late in Munster. But now they have no state nor commonwealth; only some fanatic men everywhere privately traverse the country, and deposit the seeds of the pestilence where they can. When we catch them, we get some learned men to instruct them, and restore them to a better mind, if they can. But if they persist in condemning our baptism, and civil governments, and in other impieties which amount to rebellion, we punish them."

From this it appeared that in 1538 a secret colony of this sect had secured a footing in England, and the work of transplanting was then in progress. This must have been near the first appearance of the sect in England. And there is no evidence that any Englishmen had embraced their doctrines as early as this. The pretence of some baptist writers, that there were baptists in England before the rise of Muncer and his party, among the Lollards, we have shown to be an error.

Wall (part 2. chap. 8) tells us, that "In the year

1523, John Frith, who was martyred that year, wrote a short tract, which he calls ‘A Declaration of Baptism.’ In it he takes notice of the anti-pædobaptist opinion as then lately risen in the world. It was but about eleven years’ standing in Germany, and was but lately got into Holland. For this was the year before the outrage and dispersion at Munster. What he says of it is this: ‘Now there is an opinion risen among certain, which affirm that children may not be baptized until they come to a perfect age, and that because they have no faith. But, verily, methinks that they were far from the meekness of Christ and his spirit, which, when children were brought to him, received them lovingly.’ And after a short discourse, he breaks off from that point thus: ‘For I trust the English, unto whom I write this, have no such opinions.’ ”

And here I cannot but pause, to expose an artifice of the baptist historian Crosby, who, referring the reader to this very paragraph from Wall for authority, yet without quoting it, puts down this Mr. Frith as a baptist martyr. That the reader may see how he produces the materials of baptist history, I give every word of his which stands in the immediate connection, as follows :

“ Though we find not in history among the martyrs, many who are taken notice of as opposers of infant baptism, the historians themselves being pædobaptists, yet there is found sufficient to believe that many of them were baptists. James Barnham, knt.,



who was burnt at Smithfield, April 30, 1532, seems by what he said on his examination before the bishop of London, December 15, 1531, to have been an opposer of infant baptism. In the year 1533, Mr. John Frith (see Wall's Hist. Bap. vol. 2. p. 207,) who was burnt in Smithfield, wrote a short tract, which he called a Declaration of Baptism. 'Tis published with his other works, London, 1573."

Here Frith is put in a catalogue of baptist martyrs, and a more gross falsification of historical fact can hardly be conceived. And yet it is by such historical efforts, that we are invited to believe that the sentiments of the baptists had a footing among English martyrs, before they were transplanted from Germany.

It appears that the government of England were aware of the efforts of the German anabaptists, before the German princes informed them. For in 1536, two years before the detection of Tash, the convocation take notice of the anabaptist opinions, of which they must have heard from Holland and Germany. The Munster explosion, happening two years before, would naturally have sent the fame of the sect abroad. And the convocation passed decrees against them. They did this rather because some people in England began to speak irreverently about some of the ceremonies of baptism. The lower house sent to the upper a catalogue of some of the errors and profane sayings, that began to be handed about by some of the people, some of which are the following :

"It is as lawful to christen a child in a tub at home,

or in a ditch by the way, as in a font-stone in the church."

"The water in the font-stone is only a thing conjured."

"The hallowed oil is no better than the bishop of Rome's grease or butter."

"The holy water is more savory to make sauce with, than other water, because it is mixed with salt, which is also a very good medicine for a horse with a galled back, and if there be but an onion put thereto, it is a good sauce for a gibbet of mutton."

Yet none of these sayings reflected on the practice of infant baptism. But the convocation, seeing what had been in Germany, took these for the foreshadowing of like things in England; and, deeming prevention better than cure, set forth several articles about baptism, and requiring the people to hold the opinions of the anabaptists as detestable heresies.

Two years after this, that is, in the same year in which the German princes sent the information to Henry, about Tash and his confederates, Fuller tells us of executions of anabaptists in England. His words are: "In this year a match being made by Lord Cromwell's contrivance, between king Henry and lady Ann of Cleve, Dutchmen flocked faster than formerly into England, and soon after began to broach their strange opinions, being branded with the general name of anabaptists. These anabaptists are but Donatists new dipt; and this year their name first ap-

pears in our English chronicles. I read that four anabaptists, three men and one woman, all Dutch, bore faggots at St. Paul's cross. And three days after, a man and a woman of this sect were burnt at Smithfield. And the name of the sect this year first appears in English history."

But Fox spoke of some, two or three years before. He says, that during the time of queen Ann Boleyn, no great persecution existed, save only that the registers of London mention certain Dutchmen, counted for anabaptists, of whom ten were put to death in sundry places, in 1535; other ten repented, and were saved. These were probably a part of those concerned in the insurrection at Amsterdam. For an anonymous author of an English pamphlet, written in 1647, called "A Short History of the Anabaptists," says that many Dutchmen from several parts, who had been appointed to assist John Geles, in the surprize of Amsterdam, hearing the ill success, fled into England in two ships. That insurrection was but a few weeks before these Dutchmen were found in London. And the writer of the pamphlet says, that those two ship-loads were the first stock of Dutch anti-pædobaptists in England. But whether this be true or not, the martyrs in this case were all Dutch. And if they had been partners in that conspiracy for blood, and if they were employed in extending the same bloody enterprize into England, they richly deserved the end which they reached.

Bishop Burnet says, that in October, 1538, there was a commission sent to Cranmer, Stokesby, and Sampson, and some others, to enquire after the anabaptists, to proceed against them, to restore the penitent, to burn their books, and to deliver the obstinate to the secular arm. But that anything resulted from that commission does not appear. In the next month, the king put forth a proclamation, condemning all the books of the anabaptists, and requiring those who vended them to be punished. And in the next month he issued a circular letter to all the justices in England, requiring them to execute the laws against anabaptists. The parliament also this year passed an act of grace, from the benefits of which anabaptists were excepted.

During the whole reign of Henry VIII., not a single example had occurred, of an Englishman embracing anabaptism. But as the anabaptists in Germany had wrought out for themselves a bad name, and as the name, connected with so many horrid scenes, had become a term of reproach, it was common for the papists in Germany to apply it in reproach to all protestants. This habit of the papists was transferred to England. And Henry, in his speech to parliament in December, 1545, alludes to it. And the existence of this habit must be borne in mind, lest from the speech of papists we be led to overrate the extent of the sect in England at this time.

But the short reign of Edward VI. was more pro-

pitious to the growth of anabaptism. A pious youth ascended the throne, vacated by the death of a tyrant. The work of persecution for the most part ceased. And it was more safe for the German anabaptists to scatter their seed in England. Heylin says: "The anabaptists who had kept themselves to themselves in the late king's time, began to look abroad and disperse their dotages. For the preventing of the mischief, before it came to a head, some of them were arrested." But this is told more at large by Burnet, as follows:

"At this time, there were many anabaptists in several parts of England; they were generally Germans, whom the revolutions there had forced to change their seats. Upon Luther's first preaching in Germany, there arose many, who, building on some of his principles, carried things much further than he did. The chief foundation he laid down was, that the scripture was the only rule to christians. Upon this many argued that the mysteries of the trinity, and Christ's incarnation and sufferings, of the fall of man, and the aids of grace, were indeed philosophical subtilities, and only pretended to be deduced from scripture, as almost all opinions of religion were, and therefore they rejected them. Amongst these, the baptism of infants was one. They held that to be no baptism, and so were re-baptized. But from this, which was most noticed, as being a visible thing, they all carried the general name of anabaptists. On the 12th of April, 1547, there was a complaint brought to the

council, that with the strangers that were come in England, some of that persuasion had come over, and were disseminating their errors and making proselytes. So a commission was ordered for the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Ely, Worcester, Chichester, Lincoln, and Rochester, Sir Wm. Peter, Sir Thomas Smith, Dr. Cox, Dr. May, and some others, three of them being a quorum, to examine and search after all anabaptist heretics, or contemners of the common prayer. They were to endeavor to reclaim them, and to enjoin penance, and give them absolution; or, if they were obstinate, to excommunicate and imprison them, and to deliver them over to the secular power, to be further proceeded against. Some tradesmen in London, were brought before these commissioners in May, and were persuaded to abjure their former opinions;” and among the rest that against infant baptism.

“ One of those who thus abjured, was commanded to carry a faggot next Sunday, at St. Paul’s, where there should be a sermon, setting forth his heresy. But there was another of these extremely obstinate, Joan Bocher, commonly called Joan of Kent. She denied that Christ was truly incarnate of the virgin, whose flesh being sinful, he could take none of it. But the word, by consent of the inward man in the virgin, took flesh of her; these were her words. They took much pains about her, but she was so extravagantly conceited in her own notions, that she

rejected all they said, with scorn ; whereupon she was adjudged an obstinate heretic, and so left to the secular power. This being returned to the council, the good king was moved to sign a warrant for burning her, but could not be prevailed upon to do it. He thought it a piece of cruelty, too like that which they had condemned in the papists, to burn any for their consciences. And in a long discourse which he had with Sir John Cheek, he seemed much confirmed in that opinion."

"Cranmer was employed to persuade him to sign the warrant. He argued from the law of Moses, by which blasphemers are to be stoned. He told the king he made a great difference between errors in other points of divinity, and those which were directly against the apostle's creed ; that these were impieties against God, which a prince, God's deputy, ought to punish, as the king's deputies were obliged to punish offences against the king's person."

These reasons rather silenced than satisfied the young king, who still thought it a hard thing, as in truth it was, to proceed so severely in such cases. So he set his hand to the warrant, with tears in his eyes, saying to Cranmer, that if he did wrong, since it was in submission to his authority, HE should answer it to God. This struck Cranmer with much horror, so that he was very unwilling to have the sentence executed. And both he and Ridley took the woman then in custody, to their houses, to see if they could

not persuade her. But she continued, by jeers and other insolences, to carry herself so contemptuously, that at last the sentence was executed on her, on the 2d of May the next year, Bishop Scorey preaching at her burning."

In the year 1549, Hooper wrote a letter to Bullinger, in which he complains that England was troubled with anabaptists. In the next year parliament passed a law granting the king's general pardon to persons in prison, but excepting the anabaptists, from which it would appear that some of the sect were then in prison. In the same year, Ridley, bishop of London, among the questions put to his clergy, in his visitation, inserted this—whether any anabaptists or others used private conventicles. This year there was also a review of the prayer-book. And the eighth article was shaped with reference to the anabaptists, and made to read :

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk, and at this day is affirmed by some anabaptists," &c.

In queen Mary's time, we find history mostly silent about anabaptists. Philpot, a little before his martyrdom, had occasion to write to a fellow prisoner, concerning the lawfulness of infant baptism. This shows that the question was then agitated, at least in prison.

Queen Elizabeth, upon her accession, ordered all that were imprisoned for their religion, to be set at liberty. And if there were any anabaptists among



them, they were now released. One of her courtiers told her, after this jail delivery, that the four evangelists still continued in prison, and that the people longed to see them at liberty. She answered that she would talk with them herself, and know their mind. In the beginning of this reign there were no English anabaptists. And very few were left in Holland till after the revolt of those provinces from Spain, when the sect increased again. Bishop Jewell, in his defence against Harding, in the seventh year of Elizabeth's reign, twits Harding of the anabaptists, and says: "Are not these your brethren?" Harding replied, that the catholic countries are cleared of them, expressly mentioning the Dutch low countries. Jewell replied, "They find harbor among you in Austria, Silesia, Moravia, and such other countries where the gospel of Christ is suppressed. But they have no acquaintance with us, either in England, Germany, France, Scotland; Denmark, Sweden, or any other place where the gospel of Christ is clearly preached." Whence it would appear that this sort of people at this time, about forty years after their rise, had but a small existence in any protestant country.

Yet in the 16th year of Elizabeth, a congregation of Dutch baptists was discovered, without Aldgate, in London, and twenty-seven of them were imprisoned. And the next month, one Dutchman and ten women were condemned. One woman recanted, eight were banished, and two were burnt. Their tenets, agree-

ing exactly with the German anabaptists', were these : infants are not to be baptized, christians are not to use the sword, oaths are unlawful, Christ took not the flesh of the virgin Mary. These were the first that queen Elizabeth ever caused to be burnt for opinions. And she did it not till she had received an earnest remonstrance against it, from Fox the martyrologist, whom she was wont to call Father Fox. He entreats the queen that these two may be banished, as the rest were, or otherwise punished. "But to roast alive the bodies of poor wretches, that offend rather by blindness of judgment, than perverseness of will, in fire and flames, raging with pitch and brimstone, is a hard-hearted thing, and more agreeable to the practice of the Romanists, than the customs of the evangelics."

At this time, to wit, in 1575, Mr. Fuller says: "Now began the anabaptists wonderfully to increase in the land. And as we are sorry that any countrymen should be seduced into that opinion, so we were glad that the English were as yet free from that infection." And Crosby admits that "the baptists had not as yet formed themselves into distinct societies." Queen Elizabeth by proclamation commanded all anabaptists, and other heretics, to leave the country, under penalty of imprisonment or loss of goods. Most of the sect either concealed their principles, or fled to another country. Some went to Holland, where afterwards a church of English anabaptists was gathered.

Wall says, At what time anabaptism began first to

be embraced by any English, I do not find it easy to discover. But it is plain that no very considerable number were of this persuasion, till about 1640. And if this be a fact, the German anabaptists had been perseveringly laboring to thrust in the doctrines upon England, for nearly a hundred years, before they really took root there. And in that case, the rise of the sect in England was simultaneous with its rise in New England under the auspices of Roger Williams. Wall says, the first anabaptist book (except some books taken in a Jesuit's trunk, brought over to spread this opinion,) published in the English language, was a translation of a Dutch book, entitled "A well-grounded Treatise on Baptism." This was printed in English in 1618. But there was no great increase of the sect during the reigns either of James I. or Charles I., till towards the end of the latter. Dr. Featly, writing in 1645, says: "This fire, in the reigns of queen Elizabeth, king James, and of our gracious sovereign, till now, was covered in England under the ashes; or, if it broke out at any time, by the care of the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates, it was soon put out. But of late, since the unhappy distractions \* \* \* \* hundreds of men and women together re-baptized in the twilight, in rivulets, and in some arms of the Thames." And in a letter to Mr. Downham, speaking of the increase of monstrous sects of that time, he says, "The anabaptists boast of forty-seven churches."

Among the congregational churches that fled to

Holland in the reign of James, there arose by secession from the rest, a baptist church, with John Smith for their pastor. He had been a minister in the church of England, but, disliking some things in it, he went to Holland and joined the puritan exiles there. He connected himself as a member with the church in Amsterdam, of which Mr. Ainsworth was pastor. But soon he adopted the anabaptist tenet. The ministers published several books, to counteract his influence. And some of his opponents allege, that finding none who, according to his principles, were competent to baptize him, he baptized himself.

Mr. Smith was cast out of Mr. Ainsworth's church, for his heresy, and charged not only with opposition to infant baptism, but to the reading of the scriptures in the church, and not allowing the use of a translation of the scriptures, and of baptizing himself. Yet it appears that he did not, like most English baptists of that day, fraternize with the German anabaptists. And for that reason he would not be baptized by any of them, by reason of the grossness of their doctrines in other particulars. After his death, a great part of his flock returned to England, with Mr. Helwise and Mr. Morton, two ministers whom he put into the ministry. He died somewhere about 1610. The congregation established itself in London, and much increased in numbers.

This matter of finding a proper administrator, to commence a new baptism, was about this time a grave

question in England. Bishop Burnet says: "One thing was observed, that the whole world in that age, having been baptized in infancy, if that baptism was nothing, then there was none truly baptized in being, but all were in a state of mere nature. Now it did not seem reasonable, that men who were not baptized themselves, should go and baptize others, and therefore the first heads of that sect, not being rightly baptized themselves, seemed not to act with any authority, when they went to baptize others."

Crosby, the baptist historian, (vol. 1, p. 97,) says: "This difficulty did not a little perplex them, and they were divided in their opinions, how to act in the matter, so as not to be guilty of any disorder or self-contradiction. Some, indeed, were of opinion, that the first administrator should first baptize himself, and then proceed to the baptizing of others. Others were for sending to those foreign protestants, that had used immersion for some time, that so they might receive it from them. And others thought it not necessary to baptism, that the administrator himself be baptized, at least in an extraordinary case. But that whosoever saw such reformation necessary, might from the authority of scriptures, lawfully begin it."

"I do not find any Englishman among the first restorers of immersion, accused of baptizing himself, but this John Smith. And there is ground to question the truth of that also. Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. Jessun.

[men of integrity, who must have known the truth,] and some others, do indeed charge him with it, but they wrote with so much passion, that it is not unlikely that they might take up a false report on slender evidence."

Mr. Crosby further says: "I find mention made of one Mr. Helwise, and Mr. John Morton, that were of Mr. Smith's opinion, and joined with him in the reformation of baptism. And according to the rules laid down, their method must be this—that first they formed a church [of unbaptized persons, which, in a baptist view, can be no church,] of their own opinion, in point of baptism, then the church appoints two of these ministers, to begin the administration of it, by baptizing each other. After this, one or both of these baptize the rest of the congregation." This was precisely the form of Roger Williams's baptism.

But what has here become of Mr. Crosby's succession of Lollards, from Wickliffe down, holding his true baptism? If there had been this succession, there would not have been this "perplexity," of which the historian speaks, at so late a day. Let it here be understood from baptist authority, that all that is said of a long line of English baptists, prior to the days of the puritans, is so much wind and smoke. We here learn from high baptist authority, that as late as the reign of James I., "this difficulty did not a little perplex them," to find the first administrator of the reformed baptism. Mr. Crosby adds:

“The two other methods that I mentioned, were both taken by the baptists, at their revival of immersion. The former of these was, to send over to the foreign anabaptists, who descended from the Waldenses in France and Germany, [a fictitious descent,] so that one or more receiving baptism from them, might become administrators of it to others. Some thought this the best way, and acted accordingly.” Then he says that several pious persons, belonging to dissenting congregations in London, had become convinced that baptism ought to be administered only by immersion, and to adult believers, and could not be satisfied about any administration of the ordinance in England; they agreed to send over Richard Blount, who understood the Dutch language, to the Netherlands; that he went and received baptism of John Balle, and upon his return baptized Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister, and these two baptized the rest, to the number of fifty-three. So by this showing also, the Dutch anabaptists are in part the denominational progenitors of the English baptists.

But our historian tells us, that most of the English baptists looked upon all this, as needless trouble. They held, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might baptize, and begin a reformation.

It is a somewhat curious fact, that the first baptist society organized by Englishmen in England, was a secession from the first congregational society that

was organized and established there. The facts were these: Henry Jacob, fleeing from persecution, left England, and went to Leyden. After conference with Mr. Robinson there, he embraced his views, in 1610. Some time after, he returned to England, and after conference with leading puritans, it was resolved that he should commence a separate congregation in London, as the best means to work a national reform. He and his friends observed a day of fasting and prayer; and towards the close of it, each of them made confession of their faith, and stood up together and joined hands, and solemnly covenanted with each other, to walk together in the ways and ordinances of God, as they had been or should afterwards be made known to them. This was in 1616. Four years after, Jacob went to Virginia, and died there. Mr. Lothrop, afterwards the first pastor of Scituate, in New England, was chosen to succeed him. He served this little church till 1632, when they were discovered by the bishop's officers, and forty-two of them, including their pastor, were thrown into prison. After two years, all but the pastor were released; and he was soon after let out, on condition of his leaving the country in 1634. (See Bailey's *Memoir of Plymouth Colony*, vol. 1, page 300; and also Crosby, vol. 1, page 148.

From this church, seceded the first baptist church aforesaid, in this way. One of the people brought a child to be re-baptized, because it had been bap-



tized in the established church. Some others remonstrated. A debate ensued, and a vote was taken against baptizing it again. Upon this, some who were in doubt about the lawfulness of their baptism, asked and received a dismissal. Mr. Jacie, a man of respectability and learning, was chosen their pastor, and the two churches continued to commune together.

The second English baptist church had a similar origin. A congregational church was formed in London in 1621, and met in Deadman's Place, under the ministry of Mr. Hubbard, or Herbert. He, with his church, afterwards removed to Ireland, where he died, and the church returned and settled about London, and chose John Cann for their pastor. He, with some of the church, went to Amsterdam, where he died. And the church in London chose Samuel Howe for their pastor. He was a baptist, though none of his predecessors had been. After his death, the church again chose a pædo-baptist pastor, Mr. Moore, who had been a deacon in the church. From this it appears, that the church had for some time held mixed communion, and so by courtesy we call it a baptist church. (See Crosby.)

In 1639, another congregation of baptists was formed at Crutched Friars, the chief promoters of which were Paul Hobson, Capt. Spencer, and Mr. Greene.

The above facts remind us of an occurrence which

passed several years ago. We had occasion to say, in a paper which we edited, that the fathers of the congregational church, first in modern times recovered the democratic principle of church government, and that the baptists took it from them, in that the first baptist churches in England and America were secessions from ours. This the editor of the Boston Watchman denied, and with much spirit challenged the production of the proof. Now if it is any interest to any party concerned, we give here and on baptist authority, the instances in point. As the anabaptists in Germany proceeded from under the wing of the reformation there, so the first baptists in England, both Old and New, seceded from our puritan churches, after having taken the leaven from Germany.

It was during the civil wars, that this sect had its greatest success. The times then peculiarly favored a class of people that lived by complaints of tyranny, and whose cardinal principle had been that of opposition to all governments. For a large part of the nation were now in arms against tyranny, and so far made common cause with them. Not only were all civil restraints upon the propagation of the doctrine removed, but special advantages were secured. For the army of the parliament became the great arena for theological discussion, and the engine for controlling the views of the nation. And a large portion of the anabaptists had found their way into the army.

For their non-resistant principles seem to have been no more practical here, than they had been among their progenitors in Germany. Indeed, from this time, we hear little of non-resistance among the anabaptists. Cromwell, the guiding genius of the army, was willing that the anabaptists should do their utmost, inasmuch as their doctrines, though not according to his, were as destructive to the old order of things. And he even frowned upon the operations of Baxter, who sought to arrest the progress of anabaptism in the army. Baxter tells us, that a leading theme of his preaching, while a chaplain in the army, was against anabaptism. Though that portion of the army with which he was first connected, was less troubled with the sect, than that with which Cromwell was connected. Of the garrison at Coventry, which constituted his first charge, he gives a high character, and says they were chiefly the most religious men. But he says, "One or two persons came among us from New England, of Sir Henry Vane's party, and one anabaptist tailor, had almost troubled the whole garrison, by infecting the honest soldiers with their opinions. But they found not the success in Coventry which they had done in Cromwell's army. The anabaptists sent to Bedford, for one Benjamin Cox, an old minister of their persuasion, and no contemptible scholar, the son of a bishop, and he and I had first a dispute by word of mouth, and afterwards in writing." Baxter, in giving an account of all the

sects of his day, says: "The anabaptist party consisted of some, but fewer, sober, peaceable persons, and orthodox in other points, but withal of abundance of young transported zealots, and a medley of opinionists, who all hasted directly to enthusiasms and subdivision."

To show how the anabaptists were favored in the early years of Cromwell's ascendancy, an incident is taken from the life of Judge Hale, who had a cause brought before him, against anabaptists, for violently disturbing a congregation in their worship, and who was prevented from executing the laws, as he would, by men high in power, out of favoritism to the anabaptists. But before Cromwell's death, he fell out with his anabaptist friends, and deposed several of them from office. And these entered into a conspiracy to assassinate him. And before Cromwell's death, the anabaptists joined in an address to Charles II., then at Bruges, expressive of their disposition to return to their allegiance to him, on certain conditions; conditions, however, never complied with.

After the restoration of Charles, when the established church was settled on its old foundations, the anabaptists were, with other dissenters, much diminished in strength and numbers, by reason of the stringent measures of the government.

It was ever the policy of the Romish church, to make capital out of the divisions of her opponents. And the anabaptists presented a fine opportunity for

the Jesuits, to employ them as instruments for pulling down the reformed churches. And the Jesuits could more readily make tools of them for this purpose, since the anabaptists generally, and the Jesuits, united in the embrace of Pelagianism, and in the assertion that infant baptism cannot be proved from scripture. And examples are given, in which Jesuits disguised themselves as preachers of anabaptism, and propagated the doctrine with great success.

The views of the first English baptists, taking their shape from the anabaptists of the continent, were more generally heterodox, than the denomination have been since. As we have seen in previous chapters, though there were some branches and individuals of the anabaptists, that held doctrines nearly evangelical, yet the main part of them were at least as low in the scale as Pelagianism. And many were Socinians, and others the grossest infidels. Robinson, the baptist historian, says, page 485: "At the reformation, such baptists as did not believe in original sin, and they were by far the greater part, both in England and on the continent, reasoned vehemently against this doctrine," i. e., of infant sprinkling. In another place, page 389, the same writer, speaking of the anabaptists of England, as a class, says: "The third class were first generally called Pelagians, next free-will men, and lastly anabaptists. These people affirmed, that children have no original sin, and they ought not to be baptized." Mr. Robinson here goes on to quote

from a book of a Dr. Turner, written against "the poison of Pelagius, lately renewed by the furious sect of anabaptists." The author of this book, in his preface, is made to say, that he had written against "two of the opinions of Pelagius, namely, that children have no original sin, and that they ought not to be baptized." This makes it plain, that to be an anabaptist, in England, at that time, was to be at least a Pelagian.

On the continent, whence anabaptism had been transplanted to England, the system held intimate connections with the Socinians. Servetus, who was the father of Socinianism, headed one sect of anabaptists, and gave it his name. Lælius Socinus, about the year 1550, and after him his nephew, Faustus Socinus, in Poland, broached what is called the Socinian theory, denying the Lord that bought them. And having renounced the trinity, the form of words used in baptism stood in their way. Hence, Socinus spoke slightly of water baptism. He accounted it needless, in a nation settled in christianity. He said the apostles practiced it, but had no command to do it. And so other christians might do it, as a thing indifferent; and that it is immaterial whether they baptize in infancy. And, according to this teaching, it was common for his followers to neglect infant baptism. And there were in Poland other anabaptists, that were not Socinians. But they were so nearly allied with the rest, that the ordinary name given to all Socinians was, anabaptists. About the year 1650

they were banished from the kingdom. (See Wall, part 2, chap. 8.)

The same remarks will apply, generally, to the anabaptists of Bohemia and Moravia. There were, for about a century, many anabaptists mixed with protestants, in those countries. But they were, eventually, driven out by the severities of the government. In Hungary and Transylvania, they existed in greater numbers, and continued longer. Some towns and villages consisted mostly of these men, and most of these were Socinians. Some of them held that infant baptism and the trinity were the chief errors of other churches, and the only two, the renunciation of which was necessary to their fellowship.

The Socinians, or anabaptists, who were expelled from Poland, sought a refuge in Holland. And when they came thither, they mingled with the Mennonites, and brought over many of them to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Whence it happened, that one branch of the Mennonites, called Collegians, were, generally, Socinians. Another branch were Arians; and all scrupled the use of the word trinity. The Socinians that were in Holland before this immigration from Poland, followed Socinus himself, in speaking slightly of infant baptism. They held that infants are baptized, not by any positive command of God, but to avoid scandal, and that they value the baptism of the adult more than of the infant.

We have seen that anabaptism was transplanted from

the continent to England. And among its Dutch importers, there was a plentiful sprinkling of anti-evangelical doctrine. And among the first Englishmen that took anabaptism from them, there was a larger proportion of Socinians and Pelagians, than were afterwards found in the sect in England. The first baptist confession of faith in England, of which I can find any trace, was put forth in 1611. This is the work of individuals, for no churches of English baptists existed so early. This document, as given in part in Crosby's history of the baptists, is grossly heretical. It denies original sin in toto, and gives the Socinian view of the atonement, has no acknowledgment of the divinity of Christ, teaches that the scriptures and ordinances are useless to believers, because the inward witness supercedes them all, and avows the theory of the non-resistants. This would show very clearly, that the first English baptists were as corrupt in doctrine as their German fathers.

But soon after this date, we begin to find the anti-pædobaptist theory in better company. The puritans, who were the men of piety then in the English church, had now began to separate from that church. Their protest against the abuses of the established church, touched a chord of sympathy with the anabaptists, who, (though for other reasons) had long been in warfare with established institutions. The anabaptists, by means of this one point of resemblance, were brought into closer contact with the other non-conformists. And so it happened, that several of the



puritans, as we have seen, fell away to the anabaptists, still retaining the puritan doctrine, except as to baptism. These in a measure gave character to the rest; and from this time there was among the baptists an elevation of the standard of doctrine.

And as an evidence of it, we have a creed published by seven baptist churches, in London, in 1646, which was after the sect had begun to avail themselves of the freedom and prosperity procured for them by the civil wars under Cromwell. This epoch, we have seen, was the jubilee of the baptists, and the army was a vast field for multiplying proselytes to their tenet. And they chose to go into that field, with a creed in the main orthodox, for at this time Calvinism was almost the universal sentiment of the country. This combination of circumstances did much to elevate the doctrinal character of the sect. The leading portion of the sect seem now to be orthodox. But a considerable portion continued to hold anti-evangelical views.

In 1660 a convention of baptists met in London, and published a confession of faith, which was said afterwards to have been signed by more than 20,000 people, which is in the main Calvinistic. And from time to time, after this, similar confessions were put forth by larger and lesser bodies. But there was always a respectable minority of Socinian or Pelagian baptists, which finally became consolidated in the sect of general or free-will baptists, a sect which continues to this day.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *The origin of American baptists, in connection with the German anabaptists.*

The doctrine of the baptists can hardly be said to have been transplanted from England to this country. For it owes its first developments here, to those who embraced it after their arrival in the colonies. The same impression which had been made by efforts of German anabaptists on the non-conformists in England, had been made on some individual minds, with peculiar susceptibilities, among the early immigrants hither. Both here and in England, at the time of the first planting of these colonies, the name anabaptist was an object of dread, because it awoke the remembrance of the events which we have in this work described. No worse term of reproach could be used. This term indicated the end of all corrupting tendencies. Yet this circumstance would create a sympathy for it in some minds. And for this, or some other cause, it was not long before here and there an individual was found, cherishing sentiments akin to the anabaptists.

The first remarkable case of the kind, was that of

Roger Williams. He was a man of liberal education, who left the study of law for that of theology, who had taken orders in the episcopal church, and the charge of a parish. But not being framed for submission to a hierarchy, he soon embarked for America, where he arrived in 1631. Soon the church in Salem engaged him as an assistant of their pastor. The civil authorities were displeased, because Mr. W., on his arrival at Boston, had refused to commune with the Boston church, for the reason that they would not confess repentance for having had communion with the church of England. The court requested the Salem church to forbear action, till after a conference with them. But they heeded not the request, and installed Williams on the same day that the court was held. But the influence of the court so far prevailed, at length, that Williams removed to Plymouth, and labored as an assistant of Mr. Smith, the minister there. Here he raised a profitless dispute, about so small a matter as the use of the term MR. After about two years, the wiser men in the church, fearing difficulty, procured his peaceable removal and return to Salem. Mr. Brewster, the elder, then expressed his fears that he would come out an anabaptist.

The next thing that disturbed his scrupulous mind, was, that the ministers in the neighborhood held a meeting for mutual improvement, and this he feared would grow to a presbytery, to the detriment of the liberty of the churches. This evidence of his jeal-

ousy of the ministers did nothing to heal the breach already made. As another cause of jealousy, he had, in a written document, called in question the people's title to their lands, because it was founded on king James' charter. He was called to account for this, and made a satisfactory acknowledgment. After Mr. Skelton's death, Mr. Williams was formally chosen pastor of the church in Salem. The court requested the church not to install him, but they did it. Not long after, they petitioned the court for a grant of land, which was naturally refused. Williams and his church became indignant, and sent letters of admonition to all the churches to which any of the magistrates belonged, demanding a process of discipline with them. This opened a correspondence, which resulted in bringing the Salem church to a better mind. But not so its pastor. He, abandoned by his church, grew more extravagant, refused to unite with his church in public worship, because they would not separate from the churches both of Old England and New. In the real style of the Dutch anabaptists, he refused to pray or give thanks at meals with his own wife and family. This principle of separation is at this day observed, to some extent, by the Mennonite portion of the anabaptists, who refuse to eat with their own children who marry out of their connexion. He held separate worship in his own house, with a few adherents.

The court interfered. He now came out with an-

other anabaptist doctrine—the denial of the right of magistrates to administer oaths. He also insisted that all females should wear veils in public assemblies. He next procured the cross to be cut from the English flag, because an instrument of idolatry, thus showing as much of the zeal of an Iconoclast, as did Carlostadt, when he came out for anabaptism. The court called the pastors together for advice. The pastors desired opportunity to labor with him, in a way of ecclesiastical discipline. The governor told them that it would be of no use, but granted their request. It was of no use. So Mr. Williams was summoned to appear before them; Mr. Hooker, by appointment, disputed with him, before the court, but to no good effect. Sentence was passed against him in these words:

“Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church in Salem, hath broached and divulged new and dangerous opinions, against the authority of the magistrates; as also writ letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and the churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintaineth the same without an retraction, it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks,” &c.

Now in order to a proper estimate of this transaction, we must take into view the circumstances. The horrid transactions of the anabaptists, which this book describes, were then fresh in the memory of men, as

than the severity of our fathers, in the case. All must admit that it was very natural, if not necessary, for them, in the circumstances, to take him for an anabaptist of the German stock. And if they took him for such on good grounds, they could do no less than protect themselves by his banishment. That this was the policy of the court, in their laws against the baptists, made afterwards, we are told by Cotton Mather, who says, (book 7,) "The general court were so afraid lest matters might at last, from small beginnings, grow to a new Munster tragedy, that they enacted some laws to restrain anabaptist exorbitancies." The case of Roger Williams, then, was not a case of religious persecution. For his offence was a civil one. It was not a case of persecuting a baptist, for he, for aught that appears, was a believer in infant baptism at the time of his banishment.

Do any doubt whether the civil power, in any case, should have been employed to resist the anabaptists, they would of course doubt whether there should be any civil power. For anabaptism was an actual war of extermination, yea, a war with fire and sword, against the government and all that upheld it. Take the case of Muncer or of the Munster prophets, and you have a conspiracy, whose declared intent was, the extermination of all governments and of every human being, that would not submit to their baptism. So that if our denominational progenitors were so wicked as to have imprisoned a few baptists, the baptist de-

nominal progenitors did more ; they carried, as far as they could, a war of extermination against the whole human race, and in that war shed rivers of blood.

John Q. Adams, in his address before the historical society, has some remarks respecting Williams, that are worth recording here. He says : " But here he soon broached, without any hesitation, two opinions, which were eminently dangerous to the very existence of the Massachusetts colony. \* \* \* \* The first opinion was, that the charter of the Massachusetts colony was a nullity, because the king of England had no right to grant lands in a foreign country belonging to the native inhabitants. This opinion struck directly at all rights of property of the colonists, and followed to its logical conclusions, proved the impotence of the royal charters to confer upon the government any property in the soil. Other opinions no less extreme, and shaking the foundations of human society, were laid to his charge, and were by him neither disapproved nor disavowed."

" His hostility to the Massachusetts colony was neither confined to speculation nor moral definitions, but was altogether revolutionary. He denied utterly the validity of the colonists' charter, and refused to take the oath of allegiance ; and in retaliation they remonstrated against his holding a lot of land. On this he prevailed on his church to write a letter of admonition and accusation against the magistrates of



recent events. The fields of Germany were, as it were, newly smoking with the blood which anabaptist principles had caused to be spilt. This court knew not Roger Williams as a baptist, but as having divulged some of the seditious principles of the anabaptists. As to baptism, he had not at that time taught a word, in opposition to the views of the churches. The court might naturally have guessed that he would come to that, because they saw him advancing in the way of others who had. But his conversion to the baptists did not take place till some time after he reached the place of his exile. He was banished purely for the disorganizing conduct and principles, which had procured a worse punishment for so many seditious leaders in Germany.

With anabaptism the court were well acquainted, as the deadly enemy both of church and state. They knew what tragedies it had enacted in Germany, and what stealthy infusions of it were abroad in England. With them, anabaptist, and mover of sedition, were convertible terms. And as anabaptism in Germany had ever been treated, as it was, as a civil offence, a conspiracy against all governments, yea, against human life universally, it is not strange that our fathers, in the weak and infant state of the colony, should have been deeply moved, when they found that a germ of that sect had found a planting here, and that they should have felt compelled to nip the evil in the bud, after the example of stronger governments. It



is true, that Williams did not broach all the opinions of his German predecessors. But he had begun to wage a direct warfare with the government. He attacked the very basis on which civil authority was exercised in the colony. He denounced the royal patent, by which the rulers exercised jurisdiction, as an instrument of injustice, and called upon rulers and people to be humbled for taking such a patent, and utterly abrogate it at once. He denounced the use of oaths for governmental purposes, after the manner of the German anabaptists. And at the time when his course was arrested by the civil authority, if he were judged by the similarity of his spirit, he might well be counted near to a full-grown anabaptist, about to renew the tragedies of Stork and Muncer here.

If any will have it, that his banishment was an act of religious persecution, their ignorance must be their apology for doing injustice to the holiest men that ever trod this soil. The puritans might have been mistaken in their judgment of the facts, but they had strong reasons to believe that Williams, if let alone, would attempt to overthrow the government by violence and blood. When it is remembered what horror the very name of anabaptism, at that time, awoke in the mind of all the friends of peace and order, and that Williams had come out with flaming zeal, propagating the tenets, involving all that was horrible and seditious, we shall rather wonder at the forbearance,

the church, of which they were members. This was viewed at the time in no other light than as instigating a rebellion, and at the next general court, Salem was disfranchised, till an apology should be made. The people of Salem apologized, the excitement subsided, tranquility was restored, and all was quiet, until Williams prevailed upon them to look upon the cross of St. George with jealousy, and caused it to be actually cut out of the flags floating at the port of Salem. The red cross of St. George was no national banner, and an odious eye-sore to multitudes, and a great majority of the Massachusetts colonies, but in the eyes of the government of the colony it was sacred, as being the only tie which bound them to those in England who were favorable to the colony. The charter itself at that time was in imminent danger from the jealousy which existed in England of a spirit of independence in the colonies; and nothing could more clearly indicate their total independence, than the exclusion of the cross from the colonial standard."

"Williams, in the further indulgence of his conscientious contentious spirit, required his church to break off all communion with all the churches of New England, declaring that they were all ungrateful, and that all communion with the unregenerate was sin. His church staggered and paused; he gave them warning, that if they did not separate from all contaminating communion with the unregenerate, he

would separate from them. The deed followed the word. This intractable spirit entered his own house. He quarreled with his wife for preserving her attachment to that church which he had excommunicated. Can we blame the fathers of the Massachusetts colony for banishing him? In the annals of religious persecution is there to be found a martyr more gently dealt with, since he had begun the war himself, and maintained his authority, till he was deserted even by the wife of his bosom; and since the utmost punishment was an order for his removal as a nuisance from among them. They would have sent him to England for a trial, but he escaped the pursuit."

Williams appears not to have denied infant baptism till after he had been in exile two or three years. Then he made the acquaintance of a Mrs. Scott, a sister of the famous Mrs. Hutchinson, by whom he is said to have been influenced to become a baptist. He resolved that he had not been really baptized, and that there was none in the country who had been. Finally, it was determined that Mr. Ezekiel Holliman should immerse him, and then that he should immerse Mr. Holliman, which was done, and then the rest, to the number of twelve, were immersed, constituting a baptist church. But Mr. Williams did not remain in this position more than a few months. He became dissatisfied with his baptism, and held that none now upon earth was qualified to administer the ordinance. And that really there was no ministry and no church

encouraged. The legislature passed laws restraining the baptists, taking counsel rather of their fears than of those principles of toleration to which their own professions bound them. Some of the most able ministers took up the pen against the nascent sect. Among these, Thomas Cobbet, pastor of the church in Lynn, produced a defence of infant baptism, which procured for him the honor to be—*laudatus a laudato viro*. The famous John Cotton said of his book, “Cobbet, when he saw some of Christ’s sheep, that had been committed to him, caught in the snares and brambles of anti-pædobaptism, burning with zeal for God, and that too a zeal according to knowledge, yea, and also moved with the compassion of Christ towards the straying sheep, gathered what books he could out of the stores of the anabaptists, and weighed their reasons in the balance of the sanctuary, and thoroughly examined cart-loads of their testimonies, which they had heaped up. And as he excelled in sharpness of acumen, shrewdness of judgment, dexterity in embracing much in a little, and in capacity for incessant labor, he left almost nothing untried, which might tend to illustrate the truth, and disperse the clouds of error.”

The second baptist church in the colonies was formed in Boston, May 28, 1665. Mather says that this act was especially offensive to the other churches, because it received to membership and the administration of the sacrament, such as had been “excom-

municated for moral scandals." But he also says there were in this unhappy schism, several truly godly men. Which circumstance prevented the full execution of the laws that had been enacted against the baptists. Several distinguished congregational ministers of London, such as Dr. Owen, Mr. Nye, and others, wrote to the governor of Massachusetts, to dissuade from persecutions. This letter did not have immediate effect. But before long the legal restraints were relaxed, without any increase of the dreaded evil.

The doctrine of infant baptism has suffered for having been in bad company. Because Romanists have held it, it is reproached as being a Romish corruption. This fallacy is perhaps one of the most effective arguments used with the popular mind against it. But those who use it seem to be little aware how easily it may be retorted. They seem not to know who nursed and cradled the infancy of the opposite doctrine. Infant baptism confesses the guilt of having been held, among many other important truths, by the Romish church. But it does not, like the opposite error, trace its pedigree from hordes of banditti. It has, indeed, endured a captivity, and been held in forced connection with antichrist, but it was not originated, and brought forth for general diffusion, by such worthies as Muncer, Stork, Buckold, and David George. These connections are, indeed, no tests of truth. Anti-pædobaptism might have been

in existence, and could be none, till other apostles should be sent, to issue new commissions. And he was himself waiting to be commissioned as an apostle. So that though Roger Williams is counted the father of American baptists, his connection with the baptists was very brief. Yet in that brief time he deposited the seeds which, in spite of himself, remained and germinated. For though the church which he organized dissolved, the formation of permanent baptist churches was the more remote result of his having espoused the cause. There was for a long time after this, however, but one baptist church in New England. Yet there were here and there individuals holding anti-pædobaptist sentiments, and retaining connection with congregational churches. Mather, in giving the biography of the early ministers of the colony, makes out a class of what he calls anomalies, and says, that at different times, more than a score of ministers have arrived, either of scandalous lives, or with views conflicting with those of the churches. He mentions two baptist ministers, who were godly men. These were Mr. Miles, of Swanzey, and Hanserd Knollys, whom one of his adversaries calls Absurd Knowless. The latter went back to London, and the other spent the latter part of his life in Boston. The case of Mrs. Scott, who converted Williams, was an instance of a private individual early holding baptist sentiments here. Gov. Winthrop gives the case of Lady Moody, who was in the church in Salem disci-

plined for baptist sentiments, and who, in 1643, removed to Long Island, on that account. She is represented as a godly woman. In connection with the fact that female influence was so prominent in the early heresies of the colony, Mather makes some characteristic remarks, on the case of Mrs. Hutchinson. He says that "it is noted of seducers, that, like their father the devil, they usually have a special design upon the weaker sex, who are more easily gained themselves, and then are fit instruments for gaining their husbands. Indeed, a poison never insinuates so quickly, nor operates so strongly, as when woman's milk is the vehicle wherein it is given." As a general thing, when individual members of the early churches embraced anti-pædobaptist sentiments, there was no separation. After awhile it became common for baptists to turn their backs when an infant was baptized. This naturally excited the churches to more stringent measures, and this led the baptists to what Mather calls schismatical practices.

The feeling on both sides was naturally deepened, when, after the commencement of the civil war in England, infant baptism had become a great theme of discussion in the parliament army, and baptists were increasing at a rapid rate. The effect of the sympathy between the colonies and the mother country on this subject, was vastly less than we should suppose. But yet it was considerable. Our churches were alarmed, and the few baptists here and there were



held by Muncer, and still be true, as infant baptism might be held by papists, and still be true. But if there is any justice in the reproach cast on infant baptism, by reason of its connections, there is even more in the argument retorted. As almost every person has some unfortunate relatives of which he is tempted to be ashamed, so every truth has, in the changes incident to human society, had connections of which it has no occasion to glory. But if infant baptism were challenged by its opposite, to a comparison of the respectability of its connections, as they have stood in this whole history, it would have no occasion to shrink from the comparison. For to say nothing of the floods of corruption on whose bosom anti-pædobaptism first came forth with power, anti-pædobaptism is at this day the favorite theme of many of the most wild and fanatical sects, such as the Christians, the mormons, the Campbellites, the "hard-shell baptists," and so on to the end of the chapter.

From the preceding history, it is very evident that opposition to infant baptism first arose out of opposition to the doctrine of original sin. In the first effectual propagators of this doctrine, Pelagian views of depravity were all but universal. And we have shown an acknowledgment, from high baptist authority, that there was this connection between a denial of infant baptism and a denial of original sin. (See chap. XI.) And there is evidently a natural affinity between the two doctrines. And it may be a mere



fancy of ours, but we fancy that at the present day, though there is much of sound doctrine and genuine piety, in some of the many sects rejecting infant baptism, there are facts which show a connection of cause and effect between this rejection and the adoption of Pelagian, fanatical, and disorganizing views. It would be out of place here to go into this matter. And yet the mind naturally refers to the different state of society touching the interest of religion in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Here were two colonies settled side by side, near the same time, by men from the same stock ; the one under baptist, and the other under paedobaptist auspices. And the difference in the moral and religious state of the two is manifest to all. Whence has it come ?

### CORRIGENDA.

Page 233, for Potterman, read Poltermann.

Page 237, for Framaker, read Franeker.

Page 302, and in other instances, for John A Lasco, read John a Lasco.

Page 309, for John A Bruck, read John a Bruck.

Page 334, for Oldesloc, read Oldesloe.









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